**MARC ALMOND**
**"I WAS QUITE UNHAPPY"**

**JON BON JOVI**
**"PEOPLE'S CHOICE? THAT'S US"**

# RECORD COLLECTOR

EST. 1979

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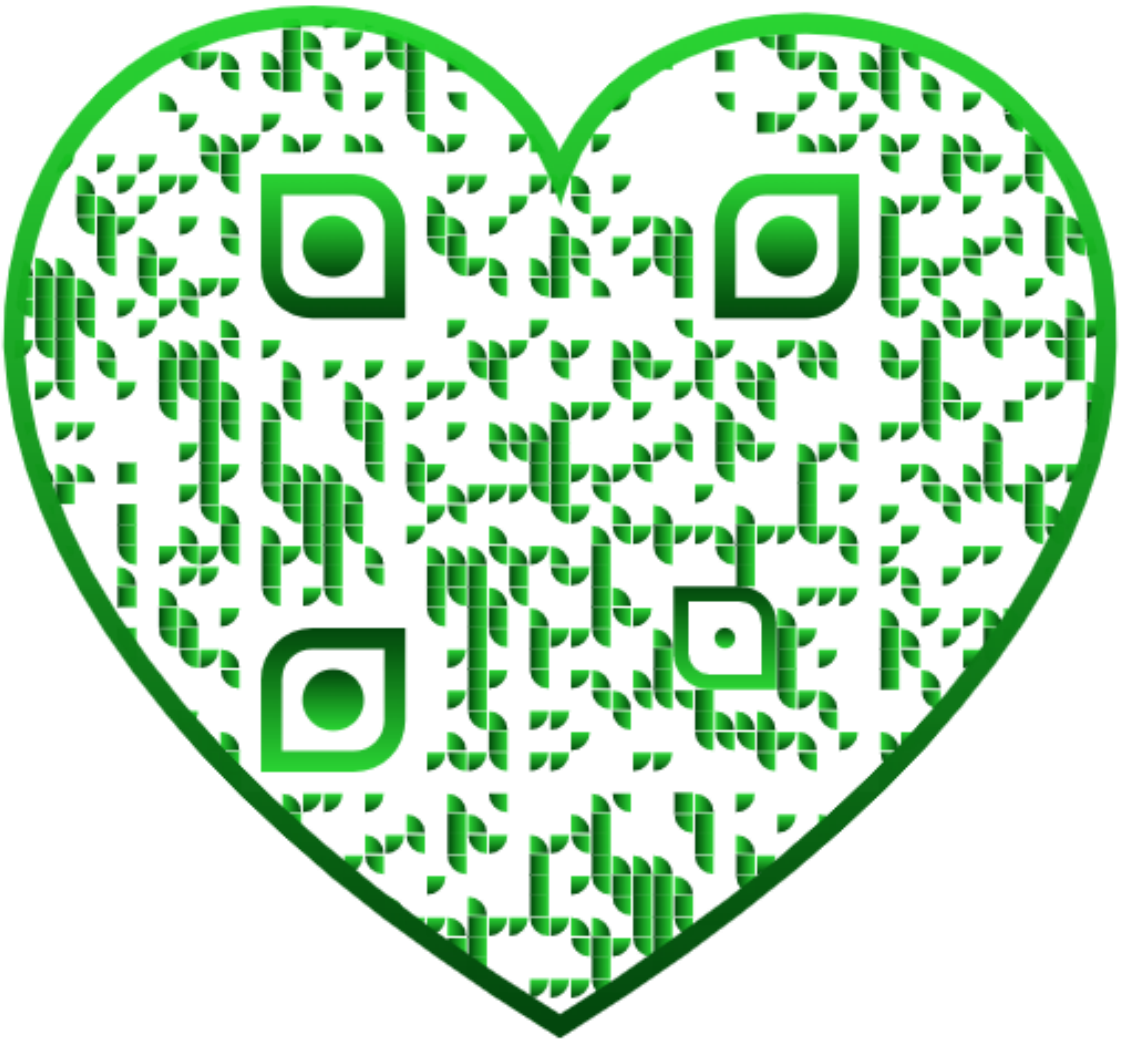
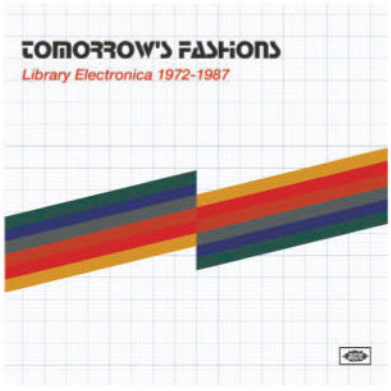
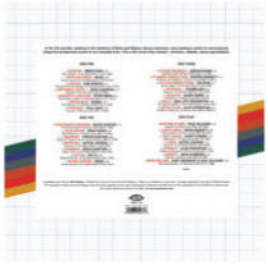


# New releases: July 2024



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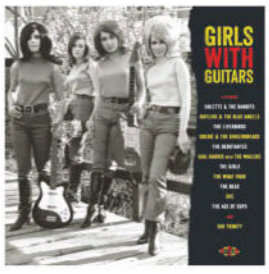


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BGPS 077 7"

These two Leon Thomas cuts have become increasingly sought after by DJs in recent years and so we are delighted to pair both full-length versions on this 33rpm 7".

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# RECORD COLLECTOR

July 2024 Issue 559

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## The *RC* staff's favourite... Britpop song

**PAUL LESTER** **Pulp** **Razzmatazz**
**TIM JONES** **Blur** **Song 2**
**VAL CUTTS** **Pulp** **Babies**
**PETER BARRY** **Oasis** **Don't Look Back In Anger**
**JOHNNY SHARP** **Suede** **The Asphalt World**
**DAVID SAUNDERS** **Oasis** **She's Electric**
**CHARLES DONOVAN** **Suede** **Killing Of A Flashboy**
**JOHN EARLS** **My Life Story** **You Don't Sparkle**
**BILL EDWARDS** **Oasis** **Rock'N'Roll Star**
**DARYL EASLEA** **Blur** **This Is A Low**

Spotify

### Record Collector | July 2024 | Issue 559 | Playlist

*"The magazine you can hear"*

**Oasis** Live Forever
**Blur** Girls & Boys
**Pulp** Something Changed
**Taylor Swift** The Tortured Poets Department
**Fats Sadi** Strike Up The Band
**The Pretty People** Going To San Diego
**John Squire** Just Another Rainbow
**Pacific Gas & Electric** Staggolee
**The Runaways** Cherry Bomb
**Little Eva** The Locomotion
**Boyd Rice/Frank Tovey** Extraction 1
**Afrodyssey Orchestra** Under The Sun
**Big Black** Kitty Empire
**Duane Eddy** Peter Gunn
**ELO** Evil Woman
**The Anchoress** Unravel
**Dana Gillespie** Spent The Day In Bed
**Marc Almond** Gone With The Wind (Is My Love)
**Crowded House** Teenage Summer
**The O'Jays** Now That We Found Love
**Pernice Brothers** December In Her Eyes
**Margo Guryan** I Ought To Stay Away From You
**Don Armando's Second Avenue Rhumba Band** Deputy Of Love
**John Grant** The Child Catcher
**Mr Big** Romeo
**Gustavo Santaolalla** The Last Of Us
**Ammar 808** Geeta Duniki

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PPA

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# John Cale




# Illusion POPtical

the new album - out 14th June 2024

# For The Record

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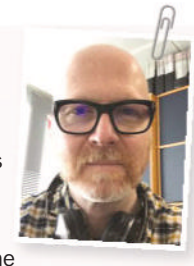
## Hello, and welcome to RC 559



Unlike punk or psychedelia, say, Britpop is a genre appellation ascribed to a certain era which conjures as many negative feelings and memories as it does positive ones. For reasons bound up with the actual music as well as the politics of the period and its perceived social and cultural leanings Britpop can excite but it can also dismay – some people hear Oasis and think, "Best British band since The Beatles"; others recoil and think, "That lot are more than partly responsible for laddism, musical conservatism, Brexit and everything else bad."

Of course, there was much more to the maligned Britpop than Oasis, and we celebrate it in this issue. We name the best Britpop albums as well as the key singles, we note that it was also a fine time for British rock and British dance/electronica, we examine the Blur v Oasis rivalry in terms of the two bands' relative collectability, one of *RC*'s writers recalls his stint in a Britpop band, we speak to six Britpop stars, Wesley Doyle unveils a new wave of Britpop artists, Jon Coleman compiles a hefty Oasis discography, and Daryl Easlea, editor of the *Rare Record Price Guide*, offers some pointers regarding Britpop records' collectability. Finally, for the sake of balance, David Stubbs sounds a note of negativity in his column, "Why Britpop sucks". It's the ultimate guide to arguably the last notable indie/rock/pop music phase, although out of all the journalists who have historically claimed authorship of the term, we neglect to decide who came up with the coinage "Britpop" (clue: it was me, when I was at *Melody Maker*).

Elsewhere, if Britpop doesn't take your fancy, there are in-depth features on, and/or interviews with, Marc Almond, Bon Jovi, Crowded House, The O'Jays and Pernice Brothers as well as the usual news and reviews and articles on rarities and collectables.

It just remains for me to pay tribute to an *RC* staffer who was here during the Britpop era, the grunge era, the Madchester era, the shoegaze era, hell, even the tail-end of the new romantic era: Group Art And Production Editor, Val Cutts, who this month celebrates 40 years' working at *Record Collector*. She joined *RC* during that heady Summer Of Frankie (Goes To Hollywood), and she hasn't missed an issue since. There are plenty of us who provide the words you read each month, but there are only three people responsible for the design: Val and her two deputies, Pete and Bruno. Those brilliant Sex Pistols, Bowie, Beatles, Pet Shop Boys, Chrissie Hynde and Paul Weller covers and features we've run lately? All Val's. She approaches each new job with the energy and invention she did in 1984, 1994, 2004 and 2014. That's rare.

Paul Lester

## PANG VS KING

I thoroughly enjoyed the latest edition of the magazine [*RC* 558]. It was interesting to read May Pang's soundtrack; so many of the records bring back good memories. In citing The Shirelles' Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow? and the way it reflected the girls' voices, it is slightly ironic that the words were written by Gerry Goffin, as was another of her selections, Up On The Roof. She also says that she was "always curious about songwriters" yet describes Carole King as the writer of these songs. King is a great writer but credit for a number of her songs should be given to the appropriate lyricists.

**Mike Moore, Loughton**

## SANDS OF CHIME

I really enjoy *RC*; I look forward to it every month. Unfortunately, I usually read it cover to cover on day 1, and it's then a long wait until the next one.

Anyway, in his review of Bernard Butler's new LP, *Good Grief* [*RC* 558], Terry Staunton says, "The scene is set in Camber Sands (probably the first mention of the East Sussex holiday spot in popular song since since Squeeze wrote Pulling Mussels From A Shell in 1980).

Terry overlooked the magnificent Heavyweight Champion Of The World by Reverend & The Makers (2007) in which they proclaim, "As near as he got to China was a week in Camber Sands."

Great mag, keep up the good work!

**Phill Marley, Macclesfield**

## COOL VARIATIONS

How refreshing to hear Billie Eilish's take on artists releasing multiple versions of their albums [*RC* 558]. It doesn't matter what format you favour, vinyl or CD, there are always variations. If we go back to the resurgence in vinyl sales the lack of pressing plants caught the industry by surprise. It is hard to understand with demand so high why coloured vinyl versions of new releases were offered. I don't know if modern technology has improved the quality of music on coloured vinyl, but back in the 70s they were inferior to the black vinyl discs and bought more as an additional fun item.

I am a Stones fan, but I am unaware of the 43 variations of their latest album, *Hackney Diamonds*. Their only saving grace is that they are limited-run variations. I was slightly annoyed that, after buying the single CD version of the album, they brought out the double CD with the live disc. I gave the single disc version away as a Christmas present. I find most of the Stones box sets good value for money, but having a lenticular cover did not tempt me to buy the box set of *Hackney Diamonds*. At the end of the day, it is all about the music. Billie believes that many artists are ignoring sustainability and taking advantage of their fanbase by releasing these multiple variations. Taylor Swift released four different CD versions of her re-recorded *1989* album, each with a sticker stating, "Collect them all". It is hard to believe that the content on each version is varied enough to be worth the outlay, but there will be fans who feel obliged to buy all four. I don't know if DVDs are recyclable, but considering refuse centres have containers for them I assume they are. If they are recyclable, surely CDs must be as well.

**Jack Haynes, Swinton**

## MULL IT OVER

Welcome to the (music) machine: *RC* 558. You covered the milestone Floydian follow-up to Dark Side Of The Moon with 12-page zest. In September 1975, a fellow 6th-former showed me a copy of *Wish You Were Here* he'd just bought at our local Woolies record counter. With that outstanding artwork of flamin' stuntmen, Ronnie Rondell and Danny Rogers, he'd failed to reveal it wasn't how it was being sold. So, after running down in a free lesson with my £1.50, I simply couldn't find it in the racks. I was searching for that cover, unaware it was sealed inside a black polybag and seeing as the staff had stacked it upside down, I would never have spied the top right-hand sticker. I had to return later, after much laughter by that smug colleague, over my schoolboy error. Congrats, Stevie Chick, for "shining" words on what is still a diamond album.

Further in [the issue], a spot-on David Pollock review of Dry Cleaning's early EP-mash-up-to-LP release is indeed "good enough to be considered a third album". I got the coloured vinyl and it'd look good in anyone's collection. Ditto The Fall's *Witch Trials* reissue, too.

Cheers, *RC* writers: Have a cigar, you're gonna go far!

**Simon Mullins, email**

## THE EYEBALLS HAVE IT

Will Sergeant's memories about visiting the home of The Residents in San Francisco on the Bunnymen's first US tour [*RC* 558] struck a chord with me, as I also made an unannounced call at their Grove Street address the year before Will (1980). There were two people there but, like Will, I wasn't sure if they were Residents or not. They were, however, able to tell me that *The Commercial Album* was to be the band's next release in the fall.

I didn't get to wear any eyeball head, though.

**Phil Rhoden, Kidderminster**

## DATA STAMP

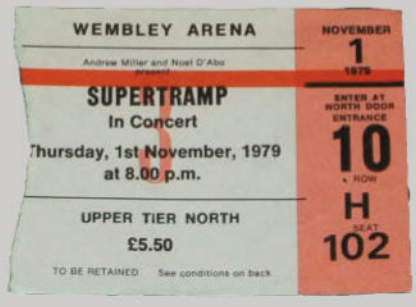
A very enjoyable piece on 1984's "format wars" [*RC* 557] with lots of fascinating facts and interesting data points - I hope you will cover more of the format wars over the coming years, particularly data-driven pieces which delve into sales, costs and other "bottom line" business aspects of the music industry which are normally not discussed too openly.

**Brendan Murray, email**

## I Was There

***A reader's recollection of a key music event***

**This month: Supertramp, Wembley Arena, Thursday 1 November 1977**




Being a great fan of the band, I was really looking forward to the gig. The support act was a then practically unknown Chris De Burgh. I really enjoyed his set. Unfortunately, during the interval all the power went off. We had the emergency lighting so we could see what was happening. They managed to get a mike going and they announced that it was a power cut in the Wembley area. They'd been on the phone to the electric board who said they were doing their best to bring things back to normal. So, we had to sit and wait. Chris came back onstage with the mike and a light and sat down at the piano and started a singalong with the audience. Singing well-known songs – everything from The Beatles and Bob Dylan to My Old Man's A Dustman. Members of the groups and roadies came onstage and joined in. Making paper aeroplanes and having great fun with a party atmosphere.

Finally, at 10.20pm, the power came back on and, 10 minutes later, Supertramp started up. Unfortunately, because of the midnight curfew they had to cut short their set. But they put on a great show. And I thoroughly enjoyed it. The highlight was Fools Overture from their then-current album, *Even In The Quietest Moments*.

**Mike Smith**

## TOP OF THE HOPS

Love your magazine. I'm especially interested in The Collector each month and I was fascinated by the guy in *RC* 556 who had a passion for wildlife sounds.

I'm surprised he never mentioned the much-maligned Frog Chorus, often criticised for their work on we All Stand Together with Paul McCartney. When they parted company (musical differences, maybe?) I tried to follow their career.

I obviously bought their 'covers' album, with excellent versions of classics like At The Hop, Mama Toad Me Not To Come, Croakodile Rock, Ribett Ribett Ribett etc, but I've lost track of them since.

Perhaps one of your writers could do a frog-rock – where are they now? feature.

**David, Aberdeen**

*With puns like that, you could easily be working up here at* RC. *Praise comes no higher.* **PL**

## A GUY CALLED... GUY

Years ago, I used to drink in the Goat House in South Norwood on the fringes of London. On one occasion we got caught in conversation with a somewhat wild-looking fellow. Among other things he told us that Hitler was the first rocker, he ran a record label, and that all his rare records had been stolen. All this while spitting and rummaging in a carrier bag of mini cab receipts. I thought nothing of this until finding an article in *Melody Maker* where he said the same things. Unfortunately, he was barred by the landlord for "upsetting the customers".

I mentioned this to another regular and he said, "Oh, yes, it's Guy Stevens, he comes here quite a lot."

**Mark Jefferies, email**

## *RC*: PROGRAMMABLE!

Congratulations to you and the team for delivering another fantastic edition with *RC* 557. I absolutely loved the article and feature on 1984. So much so that I used the 1984 article to produce a two-hour radio show dedicated to music from 1984 - on 365radio.co. Your article formed the backbone of my comments, research and show content! Thanks for the inspiration to do this show and keep up the great work at *RC*. I'm a huge fan.

**Steven Leiper (Mr L), email**

## I WAS A DAVID CASSIDY FAN BEFORE YOU WERE A DAVID CASSIDY FAN

My dear Oregano,

I was surprised and delighted that you should challenge me in print rather than 'reaching out' through our many – and always open – lines of communication.

I, too, love you unreservedly, but I must have my own moment of faux outrage. In my review of *Tanx* [*RC* 557], I was merely 'dismissingly appraising' David Cassidy in the context of what that would have meant to Marc Bolan at that time.

It's one thing to be losing out your No 1 hit parade crown to hairy yobbos like Slade, but to lose it to Cassidy – who he'd successfully kept at bay earlier in 1972 when Metal Guru held back Could It Be Forever – must have been galling for him; especially as How Can I Be Sure leapfrogged Children Of The Revolution which remained wedged at No 2.

Given that Cassidy was three years younger, and arguably cuter, it could only have been a confidence knocker for our prettiest star. I didn't have time to spell that out owing to word count, but I was sure a pop professor like yourself would have grabbed my subtext. I am very much a part of the DC fan club, and to add to your list of great taste covers, *The Higher They Climb The Harder They Fall* had the first recorded version of Ned Doheny's yacht classic Get It Up For Love as well as Bruce Johnston's I Write The Songs.

And my dear Paul [Lester] – David recorded Daydream as well as Daydreamer.

Cherish you very much,

**Daryl Easlea, Leigh On Sea**

*David Cassidy as the fulcrum for the hottest debate this magazine has seen since the last one? Who knew. Anyway, if you believe DC is the teenpop Nick Drake, and* Cherish *is his* Pink Moon*, you'll be excited to know we have a big Cassidy feature in the next issue but one. Oh, and my bad re: that Daydream/Daydreamer mix-up.* **PL**

## THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

**John Earls** turned 22 the week Oasis' *Definitely Maybe* was released and had recently moved to London – perfect timing to enjoy **Britpop** (p74). He'd also been the right age to fall for *Slippery When Wet*, so loved meeting **Bon Jovi** (p56) for this issue.

Since making Crowded House's Distant Sun his Single Of The Week in *Melody Maker* in 1993, **Pete Paphides** has interviewed Neil Finn several times. Their latest encounter is recounted on page 60.

Former *RC* staffer-turned-freelance **Joel McIver** meets his hero **Marc Almond** (p50). Like Marc, Joel has written several books, but that's where the similarities end. Apart from both having one leg shorter than the other.

**Tony Cummings** had designer stubble when he first wrote for soul music fanzines in 1963. By the time he wrote *The Sound Of Philadelphia* book in 1975, he'd demonstrated his regard for Philly Soul masters **The O'Jays** (p64), which he affirms this month.

SCAN ME FOR THE NEWSLETTERS!

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RECORD COLLECTOR
IN SHOPS 11 JUL

TAYLOR SWIFT

PLUS! PETE TOWNSHEND + VINI REILLY + WAR + JOHNNY BURNETTE + US 80s NOISE + CRANES

Taylor Swift in the driving seat, with the Top 3 vinyl LP debuts of the last 30 years

# Making green with the Swifties

**Taylor Swift** and *Record Store Day* give sales of new vinyl a record boost

On 1 May, the UK Digital Entertainment & Retail Association reported that sales of new vinyl in the week following *Record Store Day* on 20 April, and the release of **Taylor Swift**'s 11th studio set, *The Tortured Poets Department*, were the highest for 30 years. It sold 180,236 physical copies, comprising 109,392 CDs, 66,388 LPs and 4,457 cassettes. The total number of new vinyl LPs sold overall in the week was 269,134, of which 24.7 per cent were Taylor's latest opus. Some 37.2 per cent of all new vinyl albums sold the week after *RSD* retailed through independent record shops. Incidentally, Taylor's album was the biggest-selling UK LP in any week this millennium, and a transatlantic No 1, selling 859,000 vinyl copies in the US and tying with **Jay-Z** at 14 US No 1s (compared to **The Beatles**' 19 US No 1s). Taylor's the only artist to have seven albums debut at US No 1, while she has 12 UK No 1 albums this millennium, achieved consecutively over 11 years, and tying with **Madonna** as the leading female chart-topper in the UK. *Tortured* also was the first album to hit one billion-plus streams in a week on Spotify (which accounts for a third of global streaming services).

Following June's (*RC* 558) news story on 'Taylor, Billie & EcoVinyl', in which **Billie Eilish** voiced concern about "some of the biggest artists in the world" issuing multiple vinyl variants, on 16 May, at the *Great Escape* festival in Brighton, Karen Emanuel, CEO of Key Production, the UK's largest broker for physical music production,

## Taylor's latest opus ties with Jay-Z at 14 US No 1 albums

revealed research from February/March that found that 69 per cent of 500-plus vinyl buyers questioned would purchase more records *if* they had a reduced environmental impact. The participants comprised 254 female and 247 male respondents, aged 18-24 (68), 25-34 (112), 35-44 (110), 45-54 (110) and 55-65 (103). Some 77 per cent of regular buyers of new vinyl said they'd be prepared to pay a premium for reduced carbon footprint LPs. The study added that 70 per cent of vinyl buyers

## The UK Top 10 biggest-selling week-of-release LPs since 1994

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Taylor Swift** – *The Tortured Poets Department* | 66,388 |
| 2 | **Taylor Swift** – *Midnights* | 61,948 |
| 3 | **Taylor Swift** – *1989 (Taylor's Version)* | 61,791 |
| 4 | **Arctic Monkeys** – *The Car* | 37,866 |
| 5 | **Harry Styles** – *Harry's House* | 36,041 |
| 6 | **ABBA** – *Voyage* | 29,891 |
| 7 | **Liam Gallagher –** *C'mon You Know* | 29,558 |
| 8 | **The Rolling Stones** – *Hackney Diamonds* | 27,371 |
| 9 | **Arctic Monkeys** – *Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino* | 24,478 |
| 10 | **Taylor Swift** – *Speak Now (Taylor's Version)* | 22,777 |

**Vinyl variants galore, for Taylor's *The Tortured Poets Department, Midnights* and *1989 (Taylor's Version)***

## Top 5 UK No 1 Album Artists

1 **The Beatles** (16)
=2 **The Rolling Stones**, **Robbie Williams** (14)
4 **Elvis Presley** (13)
=5 **Taylor Swift**, **Bruce Springsteen**, **Madonna** (12)

***See eraltd.org, officialcharts.com.***

**Vote Beatle! The Fab Four on the stump, still the UK's No 1, for now**

## Taylor Swift's US No 1 albums

2008 – *Fearless*
2010 – *Speak Now*
2012 – *Red*
2014 – *1989*
2017 – *Reputation*
2019 – *Lover*
2020 – *Folklore*, *Evermore*
2021 – *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*, *Red (Taylor's Version)*
2022 – *Midnights*
2023 – *Speak Now (Taylor's Version)*, *1989 (Taylor's Version)*
2024 – *The Tortured Poets Department*

**Hats off to Taylor, America's albums sweetheart**

## Queen v Queen of Pop: Top 20 highest-cost US artists

| Artiste | Average gig ticket | T-shirt | Hoodie | LP | Total fan cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 **Taylor Swift** | $938 | $45 | $75 | $32 | $1,090 |
| 2 **Ye** | $292 | $130 | $200 | $50 | $672 |
| 3 **BTS** | $348 | $50 | $120 | $25 | $543 |
| 4 **Billie Eilish** | $320 | $45 | $100 | $44 | $509 |
| 5 **Post Malone** | $288 | $40 | $125 | $46 | $499 |
| 6 **Offset** | $97 | $75 | $250 | $40 | $462 |
| 7 **Lady Gaga** | $268 | $45 | $95 | $36 | $444 |
| 8 **Adele** | $296 | $45 | $60 | $38 | $440 |
| 9 **Drake** | $171 | $45 | $170 | $45 | $431 |
| 10 **SZA** | $283 | $40 | $70 | $35 | $428 |
| 11 **Harry Styles** | $287 | $33 | $60 | $38 | $418 |
| 12 **Daddy Yankee** | $252 | $47 | $75 | $40 | $414 |
| 13 **Arctic Monkeys** | $273 | $44 | $73 | $24 | $414 |
| 14 **Bruno Mars** | $268 | $43 | $53 | $28 | $410 |
| 15 **Coldplay** | $244 | $45 | $90 | $28 | $407 |
| 16 **Travis Scott** | $171 | $45 | $140 | $50 | $406 |
| 17 **Karol G** | $200 | $50 | $120 | $30 | $400 |
| 18 **Justin Bieber** | $243 | $45 | $75 | $25 | $388 |
| 19 **Pearl Jam** | $251 | $35 | $55 | $35 | $376 |
| 20 **Queen** | $232 | $33 | $75 | $35 | $375 |

***Source: self.inc, with figures rounded up.***

ascribed no extra value to 180g LPs, which require more energy to manufacture and distribute than standard 140g LPs.

Emanuel concluded, "As consumer awareness of environmental issues continues to grow, it's evident that there's a substantial market opportunity for eco-friendly vinyl. Regarding 180g records, while this is often seen by the industry as a more sought-after product, this survey shows that the industry is getting it wrong. High-quality records can be made on 140g, and this slightly lower weight can have a hugely positive impact across the whole supply chain." Key's Strategy & Sustainability Director, John Service, added,"What we're seeing is a consumer shift towards a demand for physical music made with reduced impact. Vinyl can be made more sustainably with new compounds which replace the fossil-fuel ingredients, and packaging can be made with completely recycled materials. With this increasing demand, we're creating high-quality physical music produced as sustainably as possible, and which meets the needs and values of today's music consumers." In May, Sky News reported that global vinyl sales of 80 million units in 2023 produced 156,000 tons of $CO_2$ emissions, while Spotify alone was responsible for 280,000 tons.

In May, the US-based Self Financial bank reported the findings of its *The Cost Of Being A Music Fan* study. It found that the average cost of being a music fan in 2023 was $320, based on the cost of a baseline selection of items, comprising a concert ticket, T-shirt, hoodie, and a new vinyl LP, with data supplied by SeatGeek and leading music retailers. The survey took in 109 artists, based on the year's *Billboard* Top 75 and Spotify's top streamers, discounting inactive/deceased acts, and including only those offering official merchandise and new vinyl. The study concluded that **Taylor Swift** gig tickets/resales were the most expensive at $1,619, while some went for up to $22,000. Overall, the 'basic' cost of being a Swiftie was reckoned to be greater than that for any other current artist. Finally, Taylor appears on **Gracie Abrams**' *The Secret Of Us*, due on CD, and pink and yellow LPs on Interscope on 21 June, while Ms Swift's upcoming *Female Rage: The Musical* was registered as a trademark in the US in May.

***See eraltd.org, keyproduction.co.uk, sky.com.***

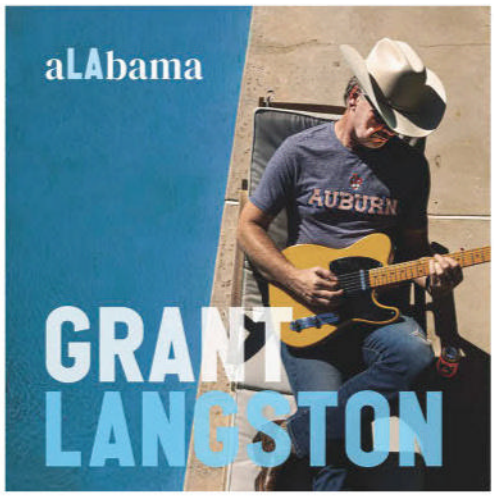
*Photos: (Taylor Swift) Bath Garrabrant; (The Beatles) Tom Murray*

# Corporate hack

Country artist **Grant Langston**'s album delayed due to hackers

Metal bands such as **Flat Black** and **The Worst Of Us** recently reported that they'd had *all* their online songs copied and re-posted on Spotify under other titles by criminal scammers, losing them revenue and exposure. Some artistes have had *unissued* tracks illegally offered online for streaming and/or downloading, one being **Grant Langston**, who found that digital files making up his *aLAbama* album, due for release 10 May, had been hacked at some point before December 2023. Four of the tracks were available to stream online in April via TuneCore, having been posted as the purported work of a fictitious artist, 'Bertram Graham'. While the revenue stolen from streaming is small in individual instances, cumulatively, it's estimated that hijacking schemes steal $2 billion per year in the US alone, usually from acts on indie labels that don't have the financial wherewithal of major label competitors to deal as effectively with getting them taken off streaming sites. Langston found that TuneCore initially asked for a fee for posting the tracks, while he was unable to have them taken down due to copyright-checking procedures. Hence, his album is delayed to 14 June, when it's due via bandcamp.com, and on vinyl LP later, though the whole scenario raises the prospect of some artistes having their work stolen, while being unable to release it properly themselves.

***See grantlangston.bandcamp.com/album/alabama. Thanks to Tony Horkins.***

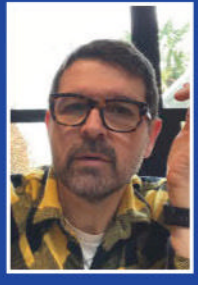



**Country or bust: Grant Langston album delayed**

## HELLO IT'S ME

# Howard Monk

**Drummer Howard Monk, of Billy Mahonie, on the post-rockers' first studio set in 24 years**



***How come you're back now?***
We'd been playing the odd show, and at one in Walthamstow, in 2017, we decided to make new music. It's taken no time!

***Tell us about the new album.***
It follows on from *What Becomes Before*, and we're happy with it. Some of the ideas started yonks ago in rehearsals. Gav [Baker] is the librarian, recording and filing all rehearsals. No ideas get lost. We've used piano and glockenspiel, but it's a celebration of guitar music, focused and clean, with nods to our heroes.

***Were there any amusing episodes during its creation?***
Hywell [Dinsdale] arrived on an early flight from Denmark and slept in the doorway of the pub opposite the studio from 5am!

***How long did it take?***
Recorded over two weekends, three days each, October 2019/November 2022. Mixing and mastering took a while and was completed October 2023.

***What happened during the interregnum?***
Gav became a children's librarian in Norway and plays guitar in Sightseers and Enslave The Zombie. Hywell has a farmhouse studio in Denmark and works online. Kev [Penney] does foley/sound effects on Hollywood movies. I promoted shows/tours as The Local, and co-founded online education platform, TheWRD. I'm a Senior Teaching Fellow at the University Of Southampton.

***Where have your most successful markets been?***
UK, Norway, Italy, Germany, France.

***What's been the standout moment?***
Smaller basement club shows in Switzerland and Italy. I once fell down some iron Emergency stairs outside a venue in Nottingham, while carrying a tower of guitar cases. I slipped on dogshit, covering myself in the process. I feel sick now!

***What's been the worst?***
We had vans explode, lost their keys, and technically split up. So, it's lovely to be doing it again with the lads.

***Who's been the biggest inspiration?***
My family, the other three, and old pals who're professors, activists, nurses. Plus, the 1,000 true fans.

***What do you put your longevity down to?***
We're a *bit* healthier these days.

***What's next?***
I'm already thinking how I can improve for the next one and I've been practising a fair bit. There should be something new in 2025.

***What would a biopic tagline be?***
It'll be alright… Can Nicolas Cage play Gav?!

***Billy Mahonie* Fields Of Heads *yellow LP/prints/ postcard is on Whistling Sam Projects.***

## Acoustic+

**Willie Nelson** *Willie & Annie Nelson's Cannabis Cookbook*, Gallery Books, 12 November. Due: June (21) **Dave Alvin/Jimmie Dale Gilmore** *Texicali*, Yep Roc, **Jim Lauderdale** *My Favourite Place* DL, Sky Crunch, **Melanie** *The Magic Bus Sessions* (28) *The Clearwater Florida Sessions 1987-94* 2CD, Cleopatra July (12) **Megan Moroney** *Am I Okay?*, Sony (19) **Willie Nelson** *The Willie Way*, Music On CD August (23) The National's **Bryce Dessner** *Solos*, Sony, **Thomas Rhett**'s latest, The Valory Music Co.

## Blues

**Lightnin' Hopkins** unissued *Live From The Ash Grove… Plus* CD, LP, six bonuses, **Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee** unissued *Live From The Ash Grove* CD, Liberation Hall, 21 June. ■ Sheila Curran Bernard *Bring Judgement Day* **Lead Belly** book, Cambridge University Press, 11 July. Due: July (5) **Muddy Waters** *Hard Again/I'm Ready/ King Bee* 3CD, Floating World.

## Biz

Los Angeles' oldest record shop, The Record Collector, founded on Highland Avenue, in 1974, and currently at its 3,338 ft$^2$ premises, 7809, Melrose Avenue, was offered in April for $4,995,000. Its vinyl-only stock of 500,000-plus items is *not* included. See loopnet.com. ■ *Haarlem Vinyl Festival*, Haarlem, Netherlands, runs 27-29 September. See haarlemvinylfestival.stager.co.

## Hip-Hop/Dance+

The Prodigy's **Leeroy Thornhill** *Wildfire* book, White Rabbit, 12 September. Due: August (30) **Zedd** *Telos* TBC **Eminem** *The Death Of Slim Shady (Coup De Grâce)*, [TBC].

## Indie

**Oasis** *Definitely Maybe Deluxe* 2CD, blue, white 2LP, pink, white 2LP, 4LP, 16 unissued, including eight Mono Valley Version cuts, seven Sawmills outtakes, demo, Big Brother, 30 August. (See also Britpop, p74). ■ **New Starts** *Under The Striplights*, with ex-Hefner's **Darren Hayman**, Fika, 16 August. ■ ***86TVs*** DL, with **Hugo White**, **Felix White** (ex-Maccabees), **Jamie Morrison** (Stereophonics), 2 August. ■ ***Monsters Of Folk***, five unissued bonuses, ATO, 14 June. Due: June (21) **The Wedding Present** *Live 1994*, Clue, **Johnny Marr** *Call The Comet*, BMG (28) **Prefuse73** *New Strategies For Modern Crime Vol 1*, Lex.

## Jazz

**Nancy Wilson** *With Cannonball Adderley & George Shearing*, three bonuses, **Coleman Hawkins** *Encounters Ben Webster*, 10, EJSM, 21 June. ■ **Joao Gilberto** *Chega De Saudade*, three bonuses, **Antonio Carlos Jobim** *Desafinado*, Jazz Samba, 21 June. Due: June (14) **Art Tatum** *Blues Skies* 2CD, Sunset Blvd. ➤

# MUSIC MEMORABILIA & CONCERT POSTERS

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Elvis Presley 1955 Indianapolis, IN "New RCA Victor Recording Artist" Concert Poster.

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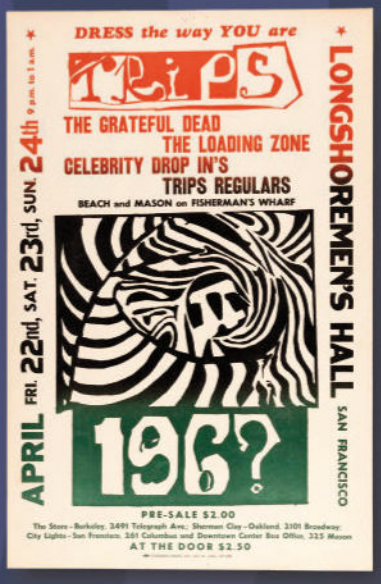
The Rolling Stones 1969 Livermore, CA Altamont Festival Speedway Concert Poster.

**Sold for $93,750 | April 2024**




Grateful Dead 1966 Trips Festival 196? Longshoremen's Hall S.F. Concert Poster (AOR-2.187).

**Sold for $37,500 | April 2024**

The Who 1973 Cow Palace, S.F. Emergency-Drummer Concert Poster Graded 9.8 (AOR-4.42).

**Sold for $5,750 | April 2024**

Jimi Hendrix Experience 1968 Large Stockholm, Sweden Concert Poster.

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# What's Happening?!?!

**Collecting's roads less travelled**

At *RC* Towers, we're banking on fresh sounds coming from **Elton John**, **Lauryn Hill**, **Circus Maximus**, **Lucy Spraggan**, **Halestorm**, **The Coronas**, **Black Label Society**, **Sam Fender**, **Five Finger Death Punch**, All Saints' **Melanie Blatt**, **As I Lay Dying**, **Ed Sheeran**, **Bon Jovi**, **Aldo Nova**, **Ariana Grande**, **Joe Satriani & Steve Vai**, **Daryl Hall**, **Envy Of None**, **Tinie Tempah**, **Guns N' Roses**, **Allison Moorer/Kenny Greenberg**, **Shinedown**, **Marillion**, **Fleet Foxes**, Slayer's **Kerry King**, ex-Journey's **Steve Perry**, **Conflict**, Killswitch Engage's **Howard Jones/Adam Dutkiewicz**, **Marilyn Manson** (on Nuclear Blast), **Pattern-Seeking Animals** (GEP), **Armored Saint** (Metal Blade), **Christina Aguilera** (5020); **Pentagram** (Heavy Psych Sounds), plus *Sub-Basement*, *Review Your Choices* reissues; a set by **Bill Kelliher** (Mastodon), **John Garcia** (ex-Kyuss), **Rich Mullins** (ex-Karma To Burn); and **Otis Redding** reissues (Sony).

**CELLULOID HEROES**

Projects due include DA Pennabaker's *REVIVAL69: The Concert That Rocked The World* documentary film, with **The Doors**, **Plastic Ono Band**, **Chuck Berry**, **Alice Cooper**, **Gene Vincent**, **Little Richard**, **Bo Diddley**, **Jerry Lee Lewis**, Rush's **Geddy Lee**, via Greenwich Entertainment, 28 June; a **Pharrell Williams** musical film, with **Missy Elliott**, via Universal; **Ghost** *Rite Here, Rite Now* film, cinemas, 20,22 June; Anthony & Joe Russo's *The Electric State* film, soundtracked by **Alan Silvestri**, on Netflix; **Blur** *To The End* documentary film, cinemas, 19 July; Lofty Nathan's *The Carpenter's Son* film, with **FKA Twigs**; Alex Mark's *The Queen Of Fashion* film, soundtracked by **Laura Mvula**; Paul Thomas Anderson's latest film, soundtracked by Radiohead's **Johnny Greenwood**, via Warners, 8 August 2025; a **Bif Naked** documentary film, 2025; John Woo's *The Killer* film, soundtracked by **Marco Beltrami**, on Peacock; Robert D Krzykowski's *Grendel* film, soundtracked by **T Bone Burnett**; Potsy Ponciroli's *Motor City* film, soundtracked by **Jack White**; Thom Zimny's *Road Diary:* ***Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band*** documentary film, on Hulu/Disney+ in October; a **John Sebastian** documentary film; Doug Blush/Piero F Giunti's **Los Lobos** *Native Sons* documentary film, with **Linda Ronstadt**, **Bonnie Raitt**, **Tom Waits**, 2025; Matt Schichter's *CFNY: The Spirit Of Radio* documentary film, with Rush's **Geddy Lee**, Simple Minds' **Jim Kerr**, Sum 41's **Deryck Whibley**; Jim Jarmusch's *Father, Mother, Sister, Brother* film, with **Iggy Pop**, **RZA**, **Selena Gomez**, **Tom Waits**, **Sturgill Simpson**; Jon M Chu's *Wicked* film, with **Ariana Grande**, cinemas, 27 November, *Part Two*, 26 November 2025.

**KIT & CABOODLE**

**Miranda Lambert**'s Bluebird Studio acoustic guitar is out via Epiphone; **Slash**'s 50-copy 1963 ES-335 guitar is out via Gibson; **Joe Bonamassa** has a 1941 000-45 custom guitar out via Martin; Strawbs' **Paul Brett**'s Fret Dancer six- and 12-string guitars are out via Vintage.

**ACOUSTIC**

July (12) **Rainy Eyes** *Lonesome Highway* CD, LP, producer Dirk Powell (Loretta Lynne), Royal Potato Family (26) **American Aquarium** *The Fear Of Standing Still*, producer **Shooter Jennings**, Losing Side August (30) **Jana Mila** *Chameleon* CD, LP, blue LP, red LP/flexi, producer Todd Lombardo (Kacey Musgraves), New West.

**HIP HOP+**

August (9) **Ravyn Lenae** *Bird's Eye*, producer Dahi, (Drake), Atlantic.

**INDIE**

July (12) **Chris Cohen** *Paint A Room* CD, LP, red LP, self-produced (Kurt Vile), Hardly Art, **Clairo** *Charm* CD, LP, blue, purple, pink LPs, cassette, co-producer **Leon Michels** (The Dap-Kings), Virgin.

**POP**

June (21) **Toddy** *Always*, producer Louise Burns (Carly Rae Jepsen), Light Organ.

**PUNK+**

June (28) **Chaser** *Small Victories*, producer Cameron Webb (Motörhead), SBAM August (23) **White Hills** *Beyond This Friction*, producer Martin Bisi (Sonic Youth), Heads On Fire.

**ROCK**

September (6) **Finish Ticket** *Echo Afternoon* CD, LP, co-producer Jim Kaufman (Helmet), Better Noise.

**SOUL+**

June (28) **Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats** *South Of Here*, producer Brad Cook (Bon Iver), Stax.

**Miranda Lambert gets the Blue, with her own acoustic guitar**

# Game on!

## John Lennon's fourth solo studio set revamped for series of box sets

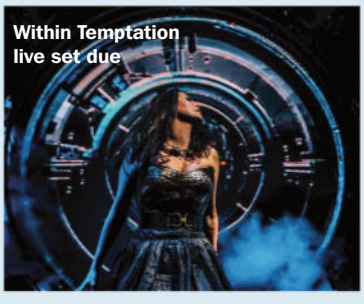
**John Lennon** *Mind Games – The Ultimate Collection* is launched this month, with several versions of his 1973 *Mind Games*. A remixed 24-track 2CD and 2LP include *Ultimate Mixes* and *Outtakes*, plus repro poster, postcards and ID card. A 72-track *Deluxe* 6CD/2BDA adds a 128-page hardback book and *Elemental Mixes*, *Elements Mixes*, *Evolution Documentary* and *Raw Studio Mixes*, plus 5.1 and Dolby Atmos mixes, two videos, unissued hidden audio/video including secret messages/easter egg bonuses from reel-to-reel, cassette and video tapes. An 1,100-copy *Super Deluxe* edition adds a 7LP box, picture disc EP box, picture disc 2LP *Magic Box* with poster, postcards, two maps, *Citizens Of Nutopia* box with repro flag, plaque, ID card, stamp, fishes, badges, *I-Ching* box with three coins, torch, magnet, *Puzzle Tiles* box, and John Lennon/**Yoko Ono** *Mind Games* 288-page hardback book, due as a standalone, 24 September.

***John Lennon Mind Games – The Ultimate Collection* editions are on Universal, 12 July.**

**John Lennon boxes, including *Super Deluxe* nine-in-one**

# Metal

**Cavalera** *Schizophrenia* CD, blue LP, re-recording with unissued cut, Nuclear Blast, 21 June. ■ **Motörhead** *Remorse? No!* 24-track revamp 2CD, Warners, 14 June. ■ ***Category 7***, with **John Bush** (Armored Saint), **Mike Orlando** (Adrenaline Mob), **Phil Demmel** (Lamb Of God), **Jack Gibson** (Exodus), **Jason Bittner** (Overkill), Earache, 26 July. ■ **Within Temptation** *Worlds Collide Tour, Live In Amsterdam* CD/DVD/BD/book, CD/DVD/BD/lithograph, 2LP, red 2LP, white 2LP, Ziggo Dome, November 2022, within-temptation.com, 21 June. ■ Lionsgate's latest *John Wick* pinball machines feature a score by Anthrax's **Charlie Benante**. ■ **Amorphis** *Tales From The Thousand Lakes (Live At Tavastia)* coloured 2LP, CD/BD with video from Helsinki Tavastia Club, Reigning Phoenix, 12 July. ■ Ex-Megadeth's **Marty Friedman** *Dreaming Japanese* book, Permuted Press, 3 December. ■ Dave Ling *Portraits Of* ***Saxon*** *Through The Eighties* 500-copy slipcased photobook/print, 50-copy *Leather & Metal* metal slipcase edition with lenticular print, Rufus, 26 July. Due: June (14) **Gamma Ray** *Land Of The Free*, *Insanity And Genius* 2CDs, earMUSIC July (5) **Visions Of Atlantis** *Pirates II Armada* DL, Napalm (26) **Uncle Slam** *Will Work For Food/When God Dies* 2CD, Dissonance September (20) **Nightwish** *Yesterwynde*, Nuclear Blast, **Seether**'s latest 2026 **Kreator**'s latest TBC **Flotsam & Jetsam** *I Am The Weapon*, AFM.



**Within Temptation live set due**

# Prog/Avant

**John Lees' Barclay James Harvest** *Philharmonic! The Orchestral Concert* 2CD/DVD/BD, Huddersfield Town Hall, September 2023, **John Cale** *Ship Of Fools* 3CD, with *Fear*, *Slow Dazzle*, *Helen Of Troy*, seven bonuses, Esoteric, 26 July. ■ **Devin Townsend** *Overexposed And Underdeveloped* photobook is due via Rocket88. ■ **GUM** *III* Times, with **Jay Watson** (Tame Impala), **Ambrose Kenny-Smith** (King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard), p(doom), 19 July. ■ **Rain** *Tomorrow Never Comes*, six bonuses, Grapefruit, 12 July. ■ **Ryuichi Sakamoto** *Neo Geo* box, with 180g LP, 12", 2BD, booklet, poster, postcard, Sony Japan, 2 August. ■ **Krononaut** *II*, with **Leo Abrahams** (Brian Eno), Palomino, 9 August. ■ Andy Stuart *A View From The Embankment, A View From The Line* **Big Big Train** book, Kingmaker, 5 July. ■ **Yes** *Fragile Super Deluxe* 4CD/LP/BD, with 17-track *Remixes & Instrumentals*, 13-track *Rarities* (two unissued), *More Rarities & Live* (seven unissued), BD with 11-track *Instrumental Mix*, **Steven Wilson** 5.1, ➤

*Photo: (Miranda Lambert) Jeff Johnson*

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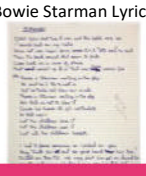
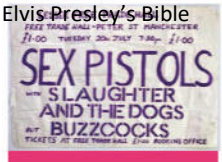


SOLD £204,600

SOLD 18,600

Elvis Presley's Bible




SOLD £27,280

SOLD £8,280

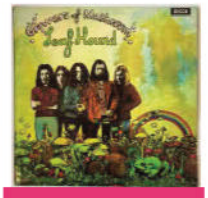
SOLD £20,350

New Order Blue Monday Anvil

SOLD £9,250

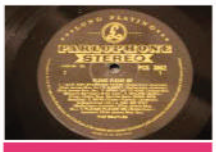
Beatles Please Please Me in MONO LP

SOLD £3,410



SOLD £13,640

Please Please Me



SOLD £10,527

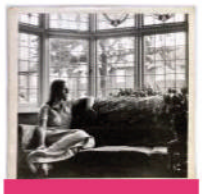
SOLD £1,900

SOLD £1,600

OASIS LP Box Set

SOLD £2,460

U2 signed copy of their War LP

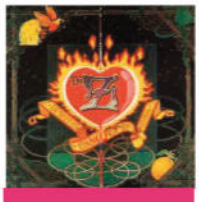


SOLD £23,560

7" Please Please Me

SOLD £8,600

SOLD £20,460



SOLD £4,100

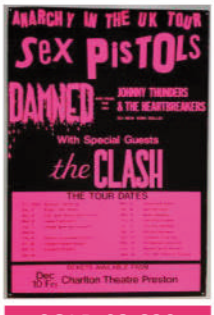
SOLD £4,685

SOLD £3,200

Signed AC/DC 7" single

SOLD £13,144

SOLD £23,000




SOLD £8,630

Sex Pistols Anarchy Tour Poster

SOLD £14,800

Rolling Stones original 1964 poster

David Bowie Signed Takamine Acoustic Guitar

SOLD £24,600

SOLD £8,015

Billy Nicholls LP Would You Believe

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OMEGA AUCTIONS

## Memorabilia lane
### Auction houses around the world

**Cher's** onetime 3,089 feet$^2$ house, 0.5 acres, bar, Coldwater Canyon, California, was offered in April via Douglas Elliman, $4.1 million. ■ On 8 May, two **Primus** guitars were offered for charity via closiit.com. ■ In May, ex-Guns N'Roses' **Gilby Clarke** offered guitars, pedals, clothing, award discs, posters, drum kits, amps, via reverb.com. ■ In May, **Duane Eddy**'s former 2,400 feet$^2$, three-bed Beverly Hills house was offered via Coldwell Banker Realty, $2.995 million. ■ In May, 300 **Grateful Dead** lots, including road cases, speakers, amps, original artwork, were offered via analogr.com. In May, an **Elvis Presley** motorbike was estimate $1 million, **Eric Clapton** prototype guitar, $3 million. ■ On 12 May, a **BB King** guitar was offered via catawiki.com. ■ In May, Wilson Phillips' **Chynna Phillips**' two-bed, two-bath house, with two-bed, one-bath guesthouse, 0.5 acres, Santa Barbara, California, was offered via realtor for $3.895 million, while Duran Duran's **John Taylor**'s four-bed, four-bath Los Angeles house, 0.39 acres, pool, was $12.995 million. ■ In May, Jefferson Airplane's **Grace Slick**'s 4,074 feet$^2$, four-bed, four-bath house, with jacuzzi, pool, sauna, 0.7 acres, Bolinas, California, was offered via sothebysrealty.com, $14.995 million. ■ In May, NOFX's '**Fat**' **Mike Burkett**'s erstwhile five-bed San Francisco house, garden, library, was offered via Berkshire Hathaway, $9.2 million. ■ On 26 June, *The Music Auction* is held via andersonandgarland.com. ■ On 31 May, **Paul McCartney** boots were offered for charity via sothebys.com. ■ In May, record awards from **The Beatles**, **Elvis Presley**, **Journey**, **GTR**, **Van Halen**, **Kenny G**, **Edgar Winter**, **Bob Marley**, **Pat Benatar**, were offered via apr57.com. ■ *Entertainment & Memorabilia* auctions are on 22-23 August, 21-22 November, via ewbankauctions.co.uk. ■ A **Beastie Boys** record award, **Run DMC** trainers, The Byrds' **Chris Hillman** mandolin were offered 26 May via ha.com. ■ In May, iconicauctions.com offered guitars from **America**, **Guns N' Roses**, **Sammy Hagar**, **Journey**, **KISS**, **Pearl Jam**, **Bruce Springsteen**, **Wings**, **Chuck Berry**, **Bon Jovi**, **Alice Cooper**, **Foreigner**, **Maroon 5**, **Traffic**, **Ronnie Wood**, **Michael Jackson** hat, outfit, **Elvis Presley** record award, **Pete Best** drumhead. ■ On 26 May, a signed **Judas Priest** drumskin was offered via lloydsonline.com.au. ■ In May, musicgoldmine.com offered a **ZZ Top** guitar, record awards from **The Go-Go's**, **Thompson Twins**, **Van Halen**, **Heart**, **ELO**, **Fiona Apple**, **Joss Stone**, **The Human League**, **Alan Parsons Project**, **The Police**, **INXS**, **Prince**, **ABWH**, **Susan Tedeschi**, **BB King**, **Styx**, **Al Stewart**, **Grateful Dead**, **Foreigner**, **Jeff Healy**, **Blackfoot**, **Barry Manilow**. ■ In May, natedsanders.com offered a signed **Keith Richards** guitar. ■ Omegaauctions.co.uk have *Audio Equipment & Music Memorabilia* sales, 25-26 June, 10-11 September, *Vinyl, Memorabilia & The **John Martyn** Collection*, 2 July, *Soul, Reggae, Blues & The BBC Collection*, 16 July, ***The Beatles***, 8 October. ■ The *Marvels Of Modern Music* auction is via rrauction.com, 14 November. ■ A vinyl/instruments auction is on 9-10 October via harperfield.co.uk. ■ *Music & Entertainment* auctions are via specialauctionservices.com, 23 July, 24 September, 19 November. ■ A vinyl/music sale is on 10 July via vectis.co.uk. ■ On 4-5 July, a vinyl/memorabilia auctions is on via wessexauctionrooms.co.uk. ■ A **Pink Floyd** One Of These Days 7" acetate was offered 25 May via cottees.co.uk. ■ In May, Y&T's **Dave Meniketti** offered jacket, T-shirts, wah-wah pedal, backdrop, mixer, jeans, for charity via store.yandtrocks.com. ■ On 5 June, unpublished **Bob Dylan** lyrics, harmonica were offered via lionheartautographs.com. ■ The *Hollywood Legends* auctions 12-15 June via juliensauctions.com include the dancefloor from the *Saturday Night Fever* film, estimate $300,000. ■ A 25 May auction via Hiram's Auction Company, Pylesville US, included signed guitars from **The Traveling Wilburys**, **Stevie Ray Vaughan**, **The Highwaymen**. ■ A 25 May auction via GWS Auctions, Agoura Hills, California, included **Elvis Presley** guitar, coat, army outfit, chair, roadcase, shirt, scarf, lithograph, film reels, record awards, record-player. ■ On 2 June, **Snoop Dogg** offered 135 items via therealest.com, including clothing, games, film/TV manuscripts, record awards, signed records, reel-to-reel tapes, DATs, promo/outtake videos, jewellery, tour riders, photos, contact strips, prints, boxing gloves, a smoked blunt. ■ A collection of Faithless' **Maxi Jazz**'s items, including guitars, clothing, is offered 13 June via bonhams.com.

**Lots of Grateful Dead on the block**

# Eating humble pie?

Plans for AI-generated **Steve Marriott** vocals elicit widespread anger

In May, *Variety* reported that **Steve Marriott**'s Estate and his daughter, **Mollie Marriott**, are opposing AI-generated 'vocals' designed to 'in-paint' unissued demos by the **Humble Pie** frontman. The Cleopatra label is said to have proposed issuing three compilations of raw demos, followed by AI-enhanced versions. Chris France, MD of the Marriott Estate, noted that "there are no confirmed plans to use Steve Marriott's voice on AI recordings, but that does not mean a deal will not be done with one of several suitors who have made offers". Mollie Marriott stated that "the Marriott Estate is due to release an AI solo album of old and new songs of my father. The surviving family, my siblings, Lesley, Toby, Tonya, and I, have nothing to do with the Estate, as there was no Will. It's run by my stepmother, who was only with my father for two years prior to his death and has since remarried. We, along with his bandmates of Humble Pie and Small Faces, are looking to stop this, as it would be a stain on my father's name. For someone who was known as one of the greatest vocalists of our generation, with such a live, raw vocal, it would break his heart if he were alive. This is only for the money, not for art or appreciation. So, this is the start of a campaign against this sort of thing, where deceased artists have no rights".

Among those backing the anti-AI clarion call are Steve Marriott's bandmates, Small Faces' **Kenney Jones** and Humble Pie's **Peter Frampton** and **Jerry Shirley**, plus **David Gilmour**, **Paul Weller**, **Paul Rodgers**, **Joe Brown**, **Bryan Adams**, **Glenn Hughes**, Guns N' Roses' **Matt Sorum**, Spandau Ballet's **Gary Kemp**, and **Robert Plant**, who said, "we just can't stand by and watch this unfold". Jerry Shirley confirmed to *Variety* that he had asked Cleopatra to create a version of Georgia On My Mind using AI-generated vocals as a trial and, as he'd suspected, they were "horrible. It sounded like someone trying to sound like someone trying to sound like Steve Marriott. I want nothing to do with it".

**Let's all sing: "There's only one Steve Marriott"**

***See variety.com.***

## Prog/Avant cont'd

Dolby Atmos mixes, Rhino, 28 June. ■ **Lindsey Stirling** *Duality* CD, LP; Amazon CD with bonus, Concord, 14 June. ■ **Mediaeval Baebes** *Realm Of The Fae*, with bonus, Queen Of Sheba, 21 June. ■ No-Man's **Tim Bowness** *Powder Dry* CD, LP, pink, yellow LPs, CD/DVD with 5.1 mix, Kscope, 16 August. ■ **Rare Bird** *Beautiful Scarlet* 6CD, eight unissued, Esoteric, 26 July. ■ Mike Cormack *Everything Under The Sun* **Pink Floyd** book, The History Press, 8 August. Due: June (14) **Pink Fairies** *Resident Reptiles*, Cleopatra, **Greenslade** *At The BBC* 2CD, Repertoire; **Circa:** *And So On & Overflow* 2CD, Cleopatra (21) **Steve Hogarth/Richard Barbieri** *Not The Weapon But The Hand*, Kscope, **Uriah Heep** *Best Of The Early Years* 2CD, SPV (28) **Yes** *Open Your Eyes*, earMUSIC July (5) **Weather Report** *The Columbia Albums 1971-75* 7CD, Music On CD, **Yes** *Rarities*, SPV September (27) **Efterklang** *Things We Have In Common* DL, City Slang TBC **Oliver Wakeman/Rodney Matthews** *Squidtales*.

## Pop+

*Orchestral 80s*, with versions of songs by **Rick Springfield**, **A Flock Of Seagulls**, **Wang Chung**, **Cutting Crew**, **Visage**, **Berlin**, **The Belle Stars**, **Hollywood Beyond**, **Curiosity Killed The Cat**, **Westworld**, **Farrington & Mann**, **Candi Staton**, **Belouis Some**, **Benny Mardones**, August, 21 June. ■ **Don Farndon** *I'm Alive* 81-track 3CD, Strawberry, 19 July. ■ **Cookie Crew** *Pick Up On This* 61-track 4CD, Cherry Pop, 26 July. ■ **Nick Kershaw** *The MCA Years* 10CD/DVD, with *Human Racing*, *The Riddle*, *Radio Musicola*, *The Works*, *B-Sides*, *Mixes* CDs, *Extended Mixes*, *Live At Hammersmith Odeon December 1984* 2CDs, DVD with 12-track Hammersmith, 13 promo clips, Cherry Pop, 26 July. ■ **Frank Sidebottom** *Little Box Of Bobbins* 3CD, with *Best Of I*, *II*, 36 bonuses, Cherry Red, 19 July. ■ **Heaven 17** *Penthouse And Pavement* 45rpm 180g LP, 2CD with 15 bonuses, *The Luxury Gap* 45rpm 180g LP, 2CD with 12, 26 July, **Altered Images** *Happy Birthday* 45rpm 180g LP, 2CD with 10 bonuses, *Pink Blue* 45rpm 180g LP, 2CD with seven, 6 September, Demon. ■ **Soft Cell** *Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret* 2CD/book 22 bonuses, Mercury, 28 June. ■ **Sheila E** *Glamorous Life*, with bonus, Music On CD, 5 July. Due: July (27) **Toyah** *Minx* 2CD, Demon.

**Nik Kershaw box set due**

Photo: (Grateful Dead) Snooky Flowers

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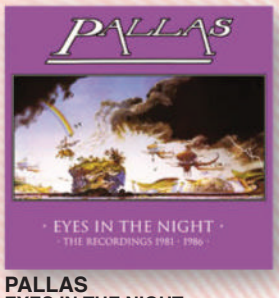


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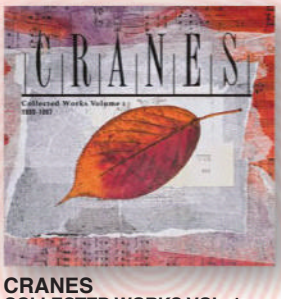


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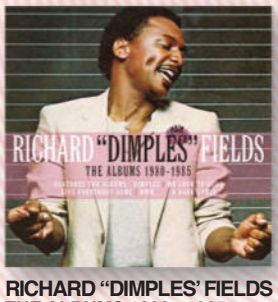


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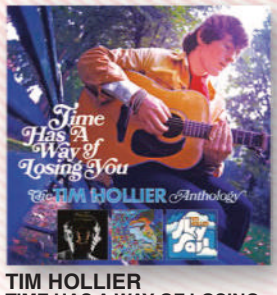


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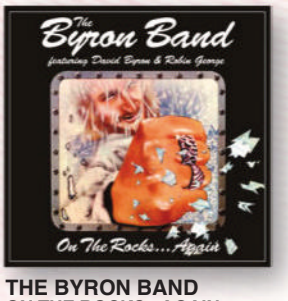


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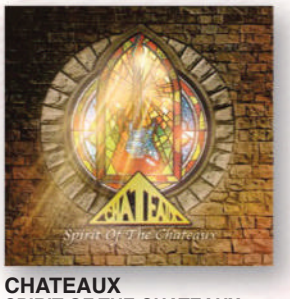


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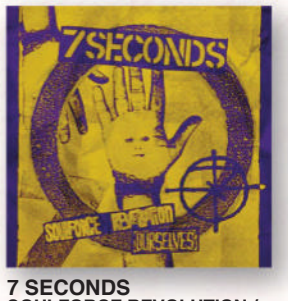


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## Post/Punk

**Cockney Rejects** *Greatest Hits Vol I & II Expanded* 2CD, 10 bonuses, Captain Oi!, 12 July. ■ Malcolm Wyatt *Solid Bond In Your Heart – A People's History Of* ***The Jam***, Richard Houghton *All The Young Punks – A People's History Of* ***The Clash*** books, Spenwood, October. Due: June (21) **The Used** *MEDZ*, Big Noise (24) **UK Subs** *The Last Will And Testament Of* CD/DVD, Wienerworld July (12) **7 Seconds** *Ourselves/Soulforce Revolution* 2CD, Dissonance, **Babes In Toyland** *Fontanelle*, Music On CD.

## Rock

**The Hot Damn!** *Dancing On The Milky Way* yellow, splatter LPs, CD with two bonuses, with **Gill Montgomery** (The Amorettes), **Liz Hayes** (Sophie Lloyd), thehotdamn.com, 27 September. ■ **Bernie Torme** *Torme* 5CD, with *Back To Babylon*, seven bonuses, *Die Young, Die Pretty*, eight, *Official Bootleg*, *Demolition Ball*, HNE, 26 July. ■ **The Doors** *Night Divides The Day* boxed book with unpublished photos, album artwork outtakes, is due as a 1,650-copy *Collector* edition with 7" picture disc, repro tour programme, mastertape boxes booklet, 350-copy *Deluxe* leatherbound edition with photo, five unpublished photos, Genesis, January 2025. ■ **Quireboys** *Wardour Street* CD, white LP, 300-copy box with red LP, CD, cassette, three signed lyric sheets, four repro passes, lanyard, sticker, poster, scarf, badges, shot glass, Cadiz, 13 September. ■ **Jack Bruce** *Songs For A Tailor Expanded* 2CD/2BD, 32 bonuses, 5.1 mix, *Rope Ladder To The Moon* documentary film; 2LP, Esoteric, 26 July. ■ ***Producers*** 15-track 2LP, 59-track 2CD, including *Made In Basing Street*, *Extras*, *Instrumentals*, Cherry Red, 26 July. ■ **John Miles** *The Albums 1983-93* 3CD, with *Play On*, two bonuses, *Transition*, *Upfront*, three each, Lemon, 19 July. ■ **Dogs D'Amour** *Dynamite China* Years 8CD, with *(Un)Authorised Bootleg Album*, *In The Dynamite Jet Saloon*, *Errol Flynn (King Of Thieves)*, *A Graveyard Of Empty Bottles Vol I*, *…Straight??!!*, *More Unchartered Heights Of Disgrace*, five bonuses, *Singles, B-Sides & Rarities*, *Even More*, HNE, 26 July. ■ Lesley-Ann Jones *Songbird* **Christine McVie** (Fleetwood Mac) book, John Blake, 14 November. ■ **Stryper** *To Hell With The Amps* remix CD, LP, cassette, LP; DVD, BD, adding live footage, stryper.com, June, with new studio set in September. ■ Traffic's **Dave Mason** *Only You Know And I Know* book, DTM, 10 September. ■ Bauhaus' **Peter Murphy** *Pete Live Vol One – Covers* gold LP, with NIN's **Trent Reznor**, *Vol Two – The Blender Theater NYC 2008* silver 2LP, 2CD with bonus, Cadiz, 21 June. ■ **David Bowie** *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars* BDA, with remix, Dolby Atmos mix, Rhino, 6 September. ■ Andrew Darlington ***The Small Faces*** *And* ***The Faces*** *On Track* book, Sonicbond, 14 June. ■ **The Beau Brummels** *Turn Around* 8CD, 24 unissued, Now Sounds, 5 July. ■ **Babe Ruth** *Darker Than Blue* 3CD, with *Babe Ruth*, *Amar Caballero*, *First Babe*, Esoteric, 2 August. ■

## Pictures At An Exhibition

**Artwork, photos and ephemera on public display**

The *Through The Lens Of Esther Anderson:* ***Bob Marley*** *– The Early Years* photo exhibit is at Muswell Hill Gallery, High Street, Hornsey, London, to 19 June. ■ In June 2025, the *SXSW London* festival takes in dozens of venues, galleries, clubs and exhibition spaces in Shoreditch. ■ Ex-Grateful Dead's **Mickey Hart**'s *Art At The Edge Of Music* art exhibition is in the immersive audio-visual *Dead Forever Experience*, including 1974 stage speakers, at The Venetian, Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, to 15 July. His *Animazing Gallery* artwork is at the Palazzo Grand Canal Shoppes. ■ The *Ice Cold: An Exhibition Of Hip Hop Jewelry*, including items from **A$AP Rocky**, **Nicki Minaj**, **Tyler, The Creator**, **Slick Rick**, **Nas**, **Erykah Badu**, **The Notorious BIG**, is at the American Museum Of Natural History, Theodore Roosevelt Park, New York, to 5 January 2025. ■ The free *EUFORIA!* exhibition on Warsaw's club scene from 1989 is at Muzeum Woli, Srbrna Street, Warsaw, Poland, including video, photos, posters, fanzines, tickets, prints, to 15 December. ■ The ***Bob Dylan*** *Remastered: Drawings From The Road* art exhibition is at Fenimore Art Museum, State Highway, Cooperstown, New York, to 15 September. ■ The free *Syd Shelton: Rock Against Racism* photo exhibition is at Hammersmith Hospital, Du Cane Road, London, to July. ■ The *Metal – Diaboulis In Musica* exhibition is at Cite De La Musique, Philharmonie De Paris, Avenue Jean-Jaures, Paris, France, to 29 September. ■ The ***Luke Combs****: The Man I Am* exhibition is at Nashville Country Music Hall Of Fame, 11 July to June 2025. It includes clothing, instruments, manuscripts, set-lists, demos CDR, posters, photos, tour props, childhood items. ■ The **Oasis** *Together We'll Fly* exhibition of all their releases, plus band instruments, stage equipment, photos, memorabilia, is at Salford Lads Club, 13-16 June. (See also Britpop, p74).

**Bob Marley & The Wailers at Prince Albert Bridge, Chelsea, London, 1973**

# Get your 'ville of blues

Craft recently launched its *Bluesville* remastered blues LPs. **Tony Burke** spoke to producer/historian/series co-curator, **Scott Billington**, about it

***Bluesville is named after the original subsidiary of the Prestige jazz label, and Craft has acquired several blues imprints/catalogues. What can we expect?***

Craft is the catalogue division of Concord, which acquired the catalogues of Prestige, Vee-Jay, Riverside, Vanguard, Testament, Hightone, Savoy, Stax, Specialty, Telarc, Trix and Rounder. Vee-Jay produced albums by Jimmy Reed and John Lee Hooker, and Stax had Albert King. Labels such as Prestige, Riverside and Vanguard released key albums during the 60s blues revival, including the 'rediscovery' of pre-war blues artists, such as Skip James and Mississippi John Hurt. More recently, Rounder and Telarc recorded Irma Thomas. The treasures, though, are thousands of tracks by obscure blues/R&B artists, including KC Douglas, Mercy Dee Walton, Doug Quattlebaum and Arbee Stidham.

***John Lee Hooker's* Burnin' Hell *and a Skip James* Today! *are among the first reissues.***

They're the first two, but I expect that we'll delve deeper into the catalogues. The biggest challenge is locating the best audio source for each album. There were several Skip James masters, including original four-track session tapes, which is what were used.

***Rounder's early releases feature recordings of obscure artists on obscure compilations. Are you looking to reissue some, as well as Philip Walker, Gatemouth Brown and Robert Lockwood?***

Gatemouth Brown *Alright Again!*, James Booker *Classified* and Irma Thomas *After The Rain* (which I produced) have been released on LP over the years. Sometimes, with more obscure releases, such as Rounder's early blues and field recordings, it can be a matter of allocating resources for mastering, because some albums have never even been on CD. That can be a time-consuming process. Craft just made transfers of Eddie Kirkland *It's The Blues Man*, on Prestige subsidiary, Tru-Sound, 1962, and Dr Ross *Call The Doctor*, on Testament, 1965, and they're now streaming.

***What about unissued recordings?***

We've discovered enough unreleased early 50s Specialty recordings by a wonderful, little-known Louisiana blues artist, to release an album. We've pledged to keep his identity secret for now, but it's exciting. And Savoy's masters deserve the curation that other key blues labels have enjoyed, so expect some.

***What's the deal with Acoustic Sounds doing the remastering?***

*Bluesville* have partnered with Acoustic Sounds' Chad Kassem to ensure that the vinyl that we produce is the highest standard. All-analogue mastering is done by Matthew Lutthans, with Chad overseeing. The records are 180g LPs, and we hope that the new vinyl surpasses any version yet released.

***See store.acousticsounds.com.***

**Scott Billington: delving deep into catalogues**

Photo: (Bob Marley) Esther Anderson

# Plastic Wax Records

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Plastic Wax Records is Bristol's longest established independent record shop with the largest range of used vinyl and CDs in the South West, including rare collector editions. We cover most genres: **Rock, Reggae, Soul, Punk, Hip Hop, Prog, Indie, Electronica, Ska, Funk, African, Country, Jazz, Classical** and **Soundtracks.**

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## Rock cont'd

Richard Houghton *Whole Lotta Love – A People's History Of* ***Led Zeppelin***, *Is Everybody Ready For The Next Band? – A People's History Of* ***The Rolling Stones*** *1969 US Tour* books, Spenwood, November. Due: June (14) Deep Purple's **Tommy Bolin** *Patch Of Blue*, Cleopatra, **Snowy White** *Unfinished Business*, Soulfood, **Billy Squier** *Signs Of Life* (21) The Byrds' **Gene Clark** *The Lost Studio Sessions*, **The Flying Burrito Brothers** *Live In Amsterdam 1972*, **Robin Trower** *In Concert With Sari Schorr* DVD, Wienerworld, **Foghat** *Energized*, Music On CD, **Grand Funk Railroad** *Grand Funk*, SPV (24) *Slow Ride* CD/DVD, BD, Wienerworld (28) **Status Quo** *In The Army Now (2010)*, Absolute July (5) **REO Speedwagon** *Can't Fight This Feeling*, SPV (12) **Cassadee Pope** *Hereditary*, Sony, **Mr Big** *Ten* CD, SACD, 180g LP, grey 180g LP/poster, Frontiers, 12 July (26) **James Gang** *Newborn/ Jesse Come Home*, Music On CD October (11) **Michael Des Barres** *It's Only Rock'n'Roll*, Rock Ridge.

**Ziggy goes Blu**

## Reggae/Soul+

**Loleatta Holloway** *We're Getting Stronger* 5CD, with *Loleatta*, four bonuses, *Queen Of The Night*, three, *Loleatta Holloway*, five, *Love Sensation*, five, *Remixes & Reincarnations*, Soul Music, 26 July. Due: June (21) **Niney & The Observers** *Tubby's Want The Channel* 2CD, Dr Bird July (5) **Two Tons O' Fun** *Get The Feeling* 2CD, Real Gone.

## Soundtracks

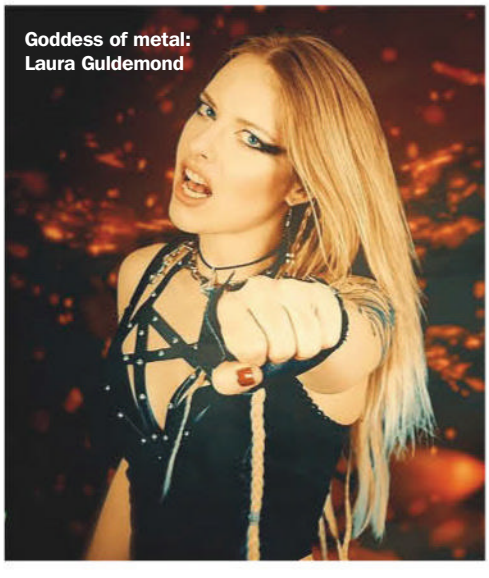
*Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid* 4k 2UHC/2BD, with three film cuts, including *Final Preview Cut* with mono soundtrack by **Bob Dylan**, new *Dylan In Durango* Q&A and making-of, Criterion, 2 July. Due: August (2) *Weird Science*, Music On CD.

***Got any news? Send it to tim.jones@metropolis.co.uk***

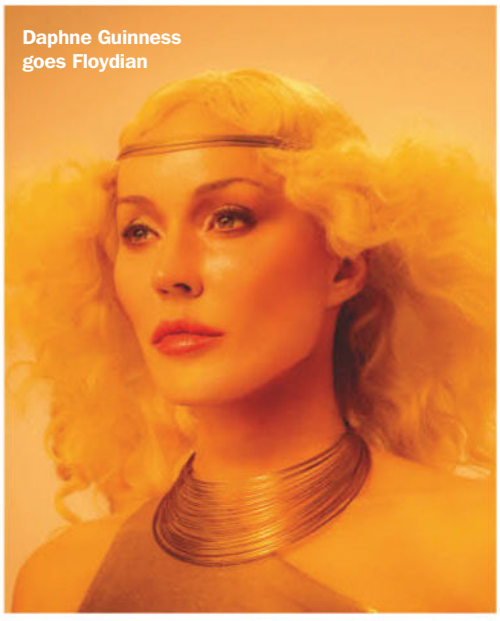
## Altogether Now

**Noteworthy guest-spots this month**

All For Metal *Gods Of Metal*, Reigning Phoenix, 23 August: **Laura Guldemond** (Burning Witches).
Becker & Mukai *Spirit Only*, SaS, 26 July: **Alexis Taylor** (Hot Chip).
The Bookshop Band *Emerge, Return*, thebookshopband.co.uk, 28 June: **Pete Townshend**.
Kaitlin Butts *Roadrunner!*, Soundly, 28 June: **Russ Pahl** (Kacey Musgraves), **Lex Price** (Miranda Lambert).
Albert Castiglia *Righteous Souls*, albertcastiglia.net, 19 July: **Joe Bonamassa**, **Popa Chubby**, '**Kingfish**' **Ingram**.
Crossfaith *ARK*, UNFD, 26 June: **Wargasm**.
Melissa Carper *Borned In Ya*, Thirty Tigers, 19 July: **Dennis Crouch** (Johnny Cash), **Chris Scruggs** (Loretta Lynn), **Billy Contreras**, **Rory Hoffman** (Ricky Skaggs).
Spinning Wheel's David Carroll *Bold Reynold Too*, Talking Elephant, 12 July: **Dave Oberle**, **Graeme Taylor**, **Brian Gulland** (Gryphon), **Chris Leslie**, **Dave Pegg** (Fairport Convention), **Tom Spencer** (The Men They Couldn't Hang).
Mike Campbell & The Dirty Knobs *Vagabonds, Virgins & Misfits* CD, LP, BMG, 14 June: colleague **Benmont Tench** (Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers), **Graham Nash**, **Chris Stapleton**, **Lucinda Williams**.
Joe Deninzon & Stratospheerius *Impostor!*, 7D Media, 11 October: **Michael Sadler** (Saga), **Randy McStine** (Porcupine Tree), **Chloe Lowry** (Trans Siberian Orchestra).
Dirt Road Band *Righteous*, Universal, 12 July: **Nikolaj Torp Larsen** (The Specials), **Bob Jackson** (ex-Badfinger).
Kyle Daniel *Kentucky Gold*, Snakefarm, 28 June: **The Cadillac Three**.
Downfall Of Mankind *Purgatory*, Seek & Strike, 14 June: **Matt Heafy** (Trivium).
The Fabulous Thunderbirds *Struck Down*, Stony Plain, 26 June: **Billy Gibbons** (ZZ Top), **Elvin Bishop** (Paul Butterfield), **Bonnie Raitt**, **Taj Mahal**, **Keb' Mo'**, **Mick Fleetwood**.
Liana Flores *Flower Of The Soul* Verve, 28 June: **Chris Bear** (Grizzly Bear), **Jaques Morelenbaum** (Ryuichi Sakamoto), **Tim Bernardes** (Fleet Foxes).
Daphne Guinness *Sleep*, Agent Anonyme, 21 June: **Rob Shirakbari** (Dionne Warwick), **Guy Pratt** (Pink Floyd).
Guru Guru *The Incredible Universe Of*, Repertoire, 5 July: **Arthur Brown**.
Hardy *Quit!!*, Big Loud Rock, 12 July: **Chad Smith** (Red Hot Chili Peppers), **Fred Durst** (Limp Bizkit), **Knox** (Vibrators).
Harpazo *The Crucible*, Rock Shots, 28 June: **Gary Wehrkamp** (Shadow Gallery), **DC Cooper** (Royal Hunt), **Mark Zonder** (Fates Warning), **Christian Liljegren** (Narnia), **Niklas Kahl** (Lord Of The Lost).
*Alex Izenberg & The Exiles*, Domino, 26 July: **Tyler Cash** (Devendra Banhart), **Max Whipple** (Sparks), **Connor Gallagher** (Lana Del Rey).
Johnny Irion *Sleeping Soldiers Of Love*, Blackwing, 9 August: REM's **Mike Mills**, Wilco's **Pat Sansone**,



**Goddess of metal: Laura Guldemond**



**Daphne Guinness goes Floydian**

**Jeff Bridges**.
Eric Krasno/Wax *Light Years*, Feel Music Group, [TBC]: **Nigel Hall** (Lettuce), **Talib Kweli**.
Leslie Mendelson *After The Party*, Pasadena, 21 June: **Waddy Wachtel** (Stevie Nicks), **Jim Keltner** (John Lennon), **Derrick Anderson** (The Bangles).
Albin Lee Meldau *Discomforts* DL, 13 September: **Jack Savoretti**.
Memphis Royal Brothers *Goin' South*, Royal, 26 July: **Charlie Musselwhite**.
Milton Nascimento & Esperanza Spalding *Milton + Esperanza*, Concord, 9 August: **Paul Simon**, **Dianne Reeves**, **Lianne La Havas**, **Shabaka Hutchings**, **Tim Bernardes** (Fleet Foxes).
Nothing More *Carnal*, Better Noise, 28 June: **David Draiman** (Disturbed).
Lara Price *Half And Half* CD, LP, Gulf Coast, 21 June: **Mike Zito**.
Qualia *Abbreviations* LP, Albert's Favourites, 5 July: **Yusuf Ahmed** (Anoushka Shankar), **Ben Reed** (David Byrne), **Joseph Costi** (Cat Stevens).
Helen Rose *Rugged Elegance*, Clover, 12 July: **Greg Leisz** (Robert Plant), **Marley Munroe** (Lady Blackbird), **Valerie Pinkston** (Diana Ross), **Carey Franks** (Tedeschi Trucks Band).
Epica's Simone Simons *Vermillion* CD, clear, red LPs, Nuclear Blast, 23 August: **Arjen Lucassen** (Ayreon).
George Strait *Cowboys & Dreamers*, [TBC]: **Chris Stapleton**.
Gerry Spehar & Friends *Other Voices* 2CD, Gerry Spehar, 21 June: **Greg Leisz** (Eric Clapton), **Dan Dugmore** (Linda Ronstadt), **John David** (The Byrds), **Jay Dee Maness** (Buck Owens), **George Marinelli** (Bonnie Raitt), **Pete Wasner** (Vince Gill), **Chris Tuttle** (Emmylou Harris), **Dennis Wage** (Delbert McClinton), **Michael Rhodes** (Joe Bonamassa), **Mark Prentice** (Elvis Costello), **Lonnie Wilson** (Tim McGraw), **Vince Santoro** (Rascals), **Michael J Dohony** (Fleetwood Mac), **Stephen Croes** (Kenny Loggins).
SML *Small Medium Large* CD, LP, International Anthem, 28 June: **Anna Butterss** (Phoebe Bridgers), **Josh Johnson** (Meshell Ndegeocello), **Booker Stardrum** (ex-Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo).
Snowgoose *Descendant*, Violette, 18 October: **Raymond McGinley** (Teenage Fanclub), **Chris Geddes** (Belle & Sebastian), **Stevie Jones** (Arab Strap), **Stuart Kidd** (BMX Bandits), **Adam Stearns** (Trembling Bells).
Voice *Holy Or Damned* CD, LP, Massacre, 12 July: **Ragnar Zolberg** (ex-Pain Of Salvation).
Morgan Wade *Observed*, Sony, 16 August: **Kesha**.
Ex-Delain's Charlotte Wessels *The Obsession* CD; splatter, ink spot, eco-vinyl 2LPs, each two bonuses, Napalm, 20 September: ex-colleagues **Timo Somers**, **Otto Schimmelpenninck Van Der Oije**, **Joey Marin De Boer**, **Vikram Shankar** (Pain Of Salvation).

*Photos: (David Bowie) Getty; (Daphne Guinness) Luca Pizzaroni*

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# The Vinylist

## News and views from the world of vinyl

### UPCOMING VINYL RELEASES

**JUNE (13)** *Ten Years Of So Young Magazine* red LP, with **Fontaines DC** demo, Rough Trade **(14) George Benson** *Dreams Do Come True* LP, CD, Rhino; **Widespread Panic** *Snake Oil King* turquoise LP, Widespread; **Lonnie Liston Smith & The Cosmic Echoes** *Astral Travelling* yellow LP, *Cosmic Funk* brown LP, Real Gone; **Acid Mothers Temple & The Melting Paraiso UFO** *Does The Cosmic Shepherd Dream Of Electric Tapirs?* 2LP, Space Age; **Coil** *Recoiled* LP, gold, white, amber LPs, Cold Spring; **Julian Cope** *World Shut Your Mouth* LP, Proper; **Doro** *Strong And Proud* turquoise 2LP, Rare Diamonds; **Ernie K-Doe** *Mother-In-Law* LP, Charly; ***The Only Ones*** green 180g LP, *Even Serpents Shine* orange 180g LP, *Baby's Got A Gun* silver 180g LP, **The Men They Couldn't Hang** *Silver Town*, **Blackstreet** *Another Level* 180g 2LPs, **Vaughan Brothers** *Family Style* blue 180g LP, **Corrosion Of Conformity** *Live Volume* silver 180g 2LP, **Cesaria Evora** *Nha Sentimento* coloured 180g 2LP, with bonus, **Monaco** *Music For Pleasure* orange 2LP, six bonuses, **Gnidrolog** *Lady Lake* orange 180g 2LP, Music On Vinyl; **Paradise Lost** *Symphony For The Lost* picture disc 2LP, Black Sleeves; **Neville & Sugary Staple** *Rude Rebels*, **Starship** *Greatest Hits Relaunched* LPs, Cleopatra; **The Impressions** *Lost Legends Of Surf Guitar (Mono)*, ***Truth***, **The Pleasure Seekers** *What A Way To Die* LPs, Sundazed; **Puscifer** *D Is For Dubby* splatter LP, BMG; Blues Pills' **Dorian Sorriaux** *Children Of The Moon* LP, CD, The Sign; **Bruce Springsteen** *Born In The USA* red LP, Legacy; **The Cyrkle** *Neon* LP, Endless Happiness; **Bill Evans** *Montreux II* blue LP, Klimt; **Black Country Communion** *V* LP, CD, Mascot; **Billy Fury** *The Best Of* pink LP, Not Now; **The Yardbirds** *For Your Love* LP, Gomelsky; **Lamb Of God** *Resolution* coloured 2LP, Nuclear Blast; **Spacemen 3** *A Perfect Prescription* LP, Fire; **Ghost** *Impera* maroon LP, Loma Vista; **Dinah Washington** *The Very Best Of* red 180g LP, Not Now **(15)** *Dr Who The Highlanders*

**Avril Lavigne best-of and reissues with bonuses in the offing**

blue, red 2LP, **Space** *Greatest Hits* green LP, **Jimmy Somerville** *Manage The Damage* blue LP, **The Mighty Boosh** *Jazz & Mutants* picture disc LP, **Suede** *Beautiful Ones* red LP, **The Bluetones** *The Singles* clear LP, **Electribe 101** *Electribal Selections* yellow LP, **Ocean Colour Scene** *It's A Beautiful Thing* blue LP, Demon **(21) Avril Lavigne** *Greatest Hits* LP, green LP, CD, *Let Go* 2LP, red 2LP, *Under My Skin* LP, silver LP, two bonuses, *The Best Damn Thing*, 2LP, pink 2LP, five, *Goodbye Lullaby*, 2LP, green 2LP, nine, *Avril Lavigne* 2LP, blue 2LP, three, Sony; **Kehlani** *Crash* clear, silver LPs, Atlantic; **Enuff Z'Nuff** *The 1987 Demos*, **The Head Cat** *Rock'n'Roll Riot On The Sunset Strip*, **UFO** *Ain't Misbehavin'*, **Junior Wells** *Blues Brothers*, **Utopia** *Oblivion*, *POV* LPs, **Front Line Assembly** *Total Terror 1986/87 Pt II*, **Todd Rundgren** *Live Chicago 1991*, The Specials' **Neville Staple** *Return Of Judge Roughneck* 2LPs, **Iggy & The Stooges** *More Power* picture disc LP, Cleopatra; **Linval Thompson** *Ganja Man*, **Serge Gainsbourg** *A La Radio*, **Dennis Brown** *Brown Sugar* LPs, CDs, Diggers Factory; **The Quill** *Wheel Of Illusion* LP, Metalville; **Jadakiss** *Kiss Of Death* 2LP, Interscope; **Thor** *Live In Detroit 1985* LP, Deadline; **Louis Armstrong** *Jazz Is Back In Grand Rapids* purple 2LP, ORG; Marillion's **Steve Hogarth/Richard Barbieri** *Not The Weapon But The Hand* LP, Kscope; **Lightnin' Hopkins** *Mojo Hand* 2LP, Sunset Blvd; *Live From The Ash Grove… Plus* LP, Liberation Hall; **The Dwarves** *Keep It Reel* LP, Greedy; **Iron Butterfly** *Live In Sweden 1971* LP, Purple Pyramid; Giant Sand's **Howe Gelb** *Weathering Some Piano* LP, Dangerbird; **The Vibrators** *Pure Mania* gold, silver 180g LPs, **Lee 'Scratch' Perry** *Scratch Came, Scratch Saw, Scratch Conquered* green 180g 2LP, **Londonbeat** *The Very Best Of* blue 180g 2LP, Music On Vinyl; **DMZ** *Lift Up Your Hood* LP, Munster; ***The Boys***, *Alternative Chartbusters* LPs, Call Of The Void; Linkin Park's **Mike Shinoda** *Post Traumatic* 2LP, orange, picture disc 2LPs, two bonuses, store.mikeshinoda.com; **Caclaera** *Schizophrenia* turquoise LP, Nuclear Blast; **Count Basie** *Basie Jam*, ***Dizzy Gillespie's Big 4*** 180g LPs, Analogue; **Cocteau Twins** *Four-Calendar Café* LP, Universal; **Nonkeen** *All Good?* 2LP, Leiter; **Roberta Flack**, **Steel Pulse**, **Lil' Kim** *Now Playing* coloured LPs, Rhino; **Jim Lauderdale** *My Favorite Place*, *The Long And Lonesome Letting Go* LPs, Sky Crunch; **Jesse Malin** *Chasing The Light* LP, CD, Wicked Cool; **Daryl Hall** *D* LP, Virgin; **Kittie** *Fire* splatter LP, red LP, CD, cassette, Sumerian; **Miles Davis** *Live At The Manchester Free Trade Hall 1960* 180g 2LP, Jazz Wax; **Ed Sheeran** *X* 45rpm green 180g 2LP, CD, nine bonuses, **Donny Hathaway**, **Lupe Fiasco** *Now Playing* LPs, Atlantic; ***Queens Of The Stone Age*** 2LP, Matador; **Marillion** *An Hour Before It's Dark Live In PZ 2023* 3LP, earMUSIC; **AC/DC** *If You Want Blood You Got It*, *Let There Be Rock*, *Ballbreaker*, *Stiff Upper Lip*, *Rock Or Bust*, *74 Jailbreak* gold LPs/prints, Columbia; **Elvis Presley** *No 1 US Singles 1956-62* LP, CD, No 1 Essentials; **Living Colour** *Stain*, *Time's Up* 180g LPs, **(28) John Williams** *Conducts* green 180g 2LP, ex-Bon Jovi's **Richie Sambora** *Stranger In This Town*, **Chet Baker/Philip Catherine** *There'll Never Be Another You*, **Kurtis Blow** *Collected* 180g LPs, **The Saints** *Prehistoric Sounds* silver 180g LP, **Boz Scaggs** *Slow Dancer* yellow 180g LP, **Imogen Heap** *The Music Of Harry Potter And The Cursed Child Parts I & II* yellow 180g 2LP, **Lordi** *Babez For Breakfast* red 180g LP, Music On Vinyl; ***Redd Kross*** 2LP, In The Red; **Kaipa** *Sommargryningsljus* 180g 2LP, CD/book, InsideOut; **Ludovico Einaudi** *Una Mattina* white 2LP, Decca; **Camila Cabello** *C, XOXO* LP, CD, Interscope; **Shania Twain** *Greatest Hits Summer Tour Edition 2024* LP, Mercury; **Snoop Doggy Dogg** *No Limit Top Dogg* 2LP, Priority; **Ahmad Jamal** *Live At Bubba's* LP, Who's Who In Jazz; **Animal Collective** *Merriweather Post Pavilion* coloured LP, Domino; **Bad Brains** *Rock For Light* orange LP, ORG; **Cher** *Closer To The Truth* LP, Warners; **Herbie Hancock** *Jammin' With Herbie* purple 2LP, **Marvin Gaye** *Alive In America* gold LP, Renaissance; **Joe Louis Walker** *Blues Comin' On*, **Iggy & The Stooges** *Scene Of The Crime* LPs, Cleopatra; Stereolab's **Laetitia Sadier & Storefront Church** *Ink & Oil* 2LP, Storefront Church; **Los Campesinos** *Sick Scenes* pink LP, Wichita; **Machine Head** *The Blackening* coloured 2LP, *Through The Ashes Of Empire* blue 2LP, Nuclear Blast; **Madeline Peyroux** *Let's Walk* LP, Just One; **Mickey Gilley** *The Singles Collection As &*

### MY PRECIOUS

**Jose James on Marvin Gaye's *I Want You***

"My all-time favourite album. I love everything about it. It's the ultimate blend of jazz, soul and R&B, and Marvin's performances are stellar. I was blessed to work with Leon Ware, who produced and wrote the album for Motown. He said that it all came from the Jazz Source, where both he and Marvin came from."

***Jose James* 1978 *is out via josejamesmusic.com.***

**AFI see red – well, orange, actually**

*Bs 1960-69* LP, Goldenlane; **The Residents** *Demons Dance Alone* LP, Cryptic Corp; **Skinny Puppy** *Too Dark Park* LP, Nettwerk; **The Del McCoury Band** *Songs Of Love And Life*, McCoury Music; **Felice Brothers** *Valley Of Abandoned Songs* LP, Million Stars; **Cher** *Living Proof* green LP, *Closer To The Truth* coloured LP, Warners; **Spooky Tooth** *It's All About*, *Spooky Two* LPs, Proper; **Neil Young With Crazy Horse** *Early Daze* LP, CD, seven unissued, Reprise; **Lupe Fiasco** *Samurai* LP, Thirty Tigers; **Cannonball Adderley** *Live In Montreux 1975*, **Dizzy Gillespie** *Soul And Salvation* LPs, CDs, **Cal Tjader** *Huracan* LP, Wienerworld; **Frank Sinatra** *Sing And Dance With* 2LP, Impex; **Charles Mingus** *The Clown* 45rpm 180g 2LP, Analogue Productions; **King Crimson** *USA* blue 200g 2LP, Panegyric; **Gustavo Santaolalla** *The Last Of Us* blue 2LP/red 2LP, Sony; **Christopher Cross** *A Night In Paris* 2LP, earMUSIC; **Marco Beltrami/Buck Sanders** *Warm Bodies* LP, CD, Filmtrax; **The Fatback Band** *Let's Do It Again* LP, Southbound; **Chick Corea Elektric Band II** *Paint The World* 2LP, CD, Candid; **Archie Shepp** *The House I Live In* LP, Steeple Chase; **Johnny Cash** *Greatest Hits* 2LP, Wagram.

**JULY (5) Goo Goo Dolls** *Live In Buffalo July 4 2004* clear 2LP, Warners; **Focus** *12* LP, CD, Spirit Of Unicorn; **Axxis** *Coming Home* LP, CD, Phonotraxx; **Threshold** *Wounded Land* remix green 2LP, CD, three bonuses, *Psychodelicatessen* remix purple 2LP, CD, four, Nuclear Blast; **Dandelion Adventure** *John Peel Session* LP, Wormer Bros; ***Roberto Roena Y Su Apollo Sound*** 180g LP, coloured LP, Fania; **Diana Krall** *When I Look In Your Eyes* 180g 2LP, Verve; **China Crisis** *Possible Love Songs Live*, **Stiff Little Fingers** *Hope Street Live* LPs, Secret; **Melanie** *Arabesque*, **Ministry** *A Tribute To Marilyn Manson*, **Terry Reid** *Frost*, **UFO** *The Visitor* LPs, Cleopatra; **RATT** *Rarities* LP, Deadline; **Sabaton** *Heroes* violet 2LP, **Slayer** *Repentless* orange LP, *The Repentless Killology Live At The Forum In Inglewood, CA* brown 2LP, Nuclear Blast; **The Vamps** *Used To Be Cool* LP, Midnight Cruiser; **Third Ear Band** *Druid One* LP, MiG; **Ocean Colour Scene** *It's A Beautiful Thing* 2LP, 2CD, Demon; **Donald Byrd** *Byrd Blows On Blue Beacon Mono* 180g LP, **Wayne Shorter** *Odyssey Of Iska* LP, Blue Note; **Candy Dulfer** *Sax-A-Go-Go* purple 180g LP, **Art Blakey** *Live At Montreux And North Sea* 180g LP, ***King's X*** gold 180g LP, Music On Vinyl; **Toots & The Maytals** *Sweet And Dandy* LP, Beverley's; ***The Mugwumps*** LP, Sundazed; **Marcia Griffiths** *Sweet And Nice Deluxe* 2LP, 14 bonuses, Be With **(12)** *Twilight OST* grey LP, Atlantic; Durand Jones & The Indications' **Aaron Frazer** *Into The Blue* LP, green, orange-blue, clear-turquoise LPs, teal LP/print, CD, Dead Oceans; **Laraaji** *Glimpses Of Infinity* LP, blue, coloured LPs, Numero; **Julian Cope** *Fried* LP, Proper; **John Coltrane** *Birdland 1962*, **Francois Hardy** *Tous Les Garcons Et Les Filles* orange LPs, **Johnny Cash** *The Rebel Sings* silver LP, Vinyl Passion; **TV Smith** *Misinformation Overload* coloured LP, Last Exit; **John Lurie** *Painting With John* 180g 2LP, Royal Potato Family; **Manowar** *The Triumph Of Steel* 2LP, *Fighting The World*, *Kings Of Metal* LPs, Listenable; **The Rolling Stones** *Voodoo Lounge* red, yellow 2LP, red, yellow 2LP/white 10", four bonuses, Polydor; **Thin Lizzy** *Shades Of a Blue Orphanage* 180g LP, Decca; **Dizzy Gillespie** *The Brilliant Mr Gillespie*, *The Ebullient Mr Gillespie*, **Oscar Peterson** *A Jazz Portrait Of Frank Sinatra* 180g LPs, **Sonny Stitt** *Blows The Blues*, **Johnny Hodges** *Blues-A-Plenty* LPs, **Louis Armstrong** *Louis In London* blue LP, CD, Verve; **The Temptations** *Cloud Nine* LP, **The Supremes** *I Hear A Symphony* coloured LP, **Marvin Gaye/Mary Wells** *Together Mono* LP, Elemental; **Mr Big** *Ten* LP, red, gold, test-pressing LPs, CD, Frontiers; **Alicia Keys** *The Diary Of*, *Girl On Fire* LPs, Sony; **Dave Brubeck** *Jazz Goes To College* 180g LP, Music On Vinyl; **Willie Nelson** *Texas Willie* LP, Sunset Blvd **(19) Leon & Mary Russell** *Wedding Album* coloured LP, Friday; **In Flames** *Lunar Strain* red, blue splatter LPs, *Colony* white, grey, pink LPs, *Soundtrack To Your Escape* dark green, light green, splatter 2LPs, *Siren Charms* green, grey, white 2LPs, Nuclear Blast; ***Duran Duran***, *Rio*, *Seven And The Ragged Tiger*, *Notorious*, *Big Thing* LPs, CDs, Warners; **Type O Negative** *Bloody Kisses* coloured 2LP, Run Out Groove; **Miles Davis** *The Miles Style* LP, Diggers Factory; **Beachwood Sparks** *Across The River Of Stars* LP, CD, Curation; **Amon Amarth** *Berserker* 2LP, CD, Metal Blade; **AFI** *Black Sails In The Sunset* orange neon, orange sunspot, orange sunset, orange oriole LPs, three bonuses (one unissued), Craft; **The March Violets** *Crocodile Promises* LP, CD, Metropolis; ***Tenacious D*** 2LP, Sony; **Ludovico Einaudi** *In A Time Lapse (Reimagined)* clear LP, Decca **(26) Modesto Duran** *Fabulous Rhythms Of Modesto* LP, red LP, Numero; **Bad Brains** *I Against I* orange LP, ORG; **Drive-By Truckers** *Southern Rock Opera* 3LP/book, with remix 2LP, seven bonuses (two unissued), New West, 26 July; **The Nuthins** *Oddities... All Sorts... Magic Mixtures: Rare & Unreleased 1993-98* LP, Detour; **Bob Marley** *Small Axe* green LP, **Lionel Hampton** *Plays Drums, Vibes, Piano* orange LP, **Louis Armstrong** *The Definitive Album* blue LP, LMLR; **Eddie Palmieri** *The Sun Of Latin Music*, **Albert King** *New Orleans Heat*, **Prince Jammy** *Meets Uhuru In Dub*, **Van Morrison** *The Legendary Bang Sessions* LPs, **Archie Shepp** *Poem For Malcolm* 180g LP, Charly; **Birdie** *Some Dusty* LP, green LP, Slumberland; King Crimson's **Gavin Harrison/Antoine Fufard** *Occultus Tramitis* LP, Timeless Momentum; **Sacred Reich** *Heel* LP, CD, Metal Blade; **Empire Of The Sun** *Ask That God* orange, white LPs, CD, uk.empireofthesunstore.com; **Sleaford Mods** *Divide And Exit* LP, red LP/flexidisc with unissued cut, alternate sleeve, CD, Rough Trade; **Fleetwood Mac** *The Best Of, 1969-74* LP, CD, Rhino; **Tir Na Nog** *Transmissions* LP, Megadodo; **Dream Evil** *Metal Gods* LP, CD, Century Media; **Gong** *Live 2 Infinitea* 2LP, Kscope.

**Mac the life: Lindsey Buckingham boxes due**

**AUGUST (2) Mark Anthony** *Muevense* LP, Sony; Teenage Fanclub's **Norman Blake** *Pilgrimage To Rising Fawn* LP, Iconic; **Snarky Puppy** *Sylva Remixed & Remastered* 2LP, Ground Up; **Cardiacs** *Heaven Born And Ever Bright* LP, The Alphabet Business Concern **(9) Milton Nascimento/Esperanza Spalding** *Milton + Esperanza* LP, CD, Concord; **The Jeff Healey Band** *Road House: The Lost Soundtrack* 2LP, Mondo; **Albert King/Stevie Ray Vaughan** *In Session* 2LP, Craft; **Celine Dion** *I Am OST* 2LP, CD, Sony **(16) Beabadoobee** *This Is How Tomorrow Moves* red LP, CD, cassette; turquoise LP, cassette, each alternate sleeve, Dirty Hit; ex-Fleetwood Mac's **Lindsey Buckingham** *20th Century Lindsey* 4LP, 4CD, with *Law And Order*, *Go Insane*, *Out Of The Cradle*, eight bonuses, Rhino; **Stray Cats** *40* white LP, Surfdog; **Sonny Rollins** *East Broadway Run* 180g LP, Impulse; **Prince Lasha Quintet** *The Cry!* 180g LP, Contemporary; **Miles Davis** *'Round About Midnight* 180g LP, Mobile Fidelity; **Afrika Bambaataa & Soul Sonic Force** *Planet Rock The Album* LP, CD, Tommy Boy; **Ocean Colour Scene** *On Top Of Everything* 4LP, 4CD, **Chairmen Of The Board** *Skin I'm In* LP, Demon; **The Script** *Satellites* LP, white LP, test-pressing LP, CD, CD/book, cassette, thescript.tmstore.es; **Hamish Hawk** *A Firmer Hand* LP, CD, So; **Nikka Costa** *Dirty Disco* LP, Go Funk Yourself **(23) Guided By Voices** *Tonics & Twisted Chasers* LP, coloured LP, Superior Viaduct; ex-Yes' **Jon Anderson & The Band Geeks** *True* LP, CD, Frontiers; **Lainey Wilson** *Whirlwind* black-white LP, CD, BBR **(30) Stan Getz** *Sweet Rain* 180g LP, Verve; **Miles Davis** *Miles* LP, Concord; **Amy Rigby** *Hang In There With Me* LP, CD, Tapete.

**SEPTEMBER Guy Manning** *Tall Stories For Small Children* 180g 2LP, three bonuses (two unissued), fairsound.com **(6)** The Coral's **Paul Molloy** *The Madmen Of Apocalypso* LP, Spring Heeled; **Nina Simone** *In Concert* 180g LP, Philips; **T.Rex** *Light Of Love* orange LP, Demon; **The The** *Ensoulment* LP, coloured LP, CD, cassette, earMUSIC; **Boston Manor** *Sundiver* splatter, blue splatter LPs, CD, cassette, Sharp Tone **(13) Allah Las** *Worship The Sun* orange LP, RHR; **Ben Webster** *At The Renaissance* 180g LP, Concord; / **Art Tatum** *The Tatum Group Masterpieces* 180g LP, Analogue; **Chilly Gonzales** *Gonzo* LP, Gentle Threat; **Tindersticks** *Soft Tissue* LP, green LP/7", CD, City Slang; **Nada Surf** *New Mirror* LP, CD, *Deluxe* coloured, brown 2LPs, 2CD, 10 bonuses, green 2LP/flexidisc, adding unissued bonus, New West; **Colin Stetson** *The Love It Took To Leave You* LP, CD, Invada; **GWAR** *Hell-O* red LP, CD, Pit; ex-Iron Maiden's **Paul Di'Anno** *The Book Of The Beast* LP, red, white, grey LPs, CD, Conquest; **The Sound** *Jeopardy*, *From The Lion's Mouth*, *All Fall Down* coloured LPs, Rhino; **Trentemøller** *Dreamweaver* LP, CD, In My Room **(20) Mayday Parade** *A Lesson In Romantics* orange, green, red LPs, Craft; **Sarah Vaughan** *Sassy* 180g LP, EmArcy; **Jake Bugg** *A Modern Day Distraction* LP, CD, RCA **(27) Shed Seven** *Liquid Gold* splatter, silver, blue, yellow LPs, CD, cassette, store.shedseven.com; **Maxïmo Park** *Stream Of Life* LP, green, yellow LPs, CD, Lower Third.

**OCTOBER (11) Animal Collective** *Sung Tongs* red, yellow 2LP, *Sung Tongs Live At The Theatre At Ace Hotel* orange, green 2LP, Domino; **Art Pepper** *Getting' Together*, *Intensity* LPs, Concord.

**DECEMBER (6) Sonny Rollins** *Way Out West* 180g LP, Contemporary.

# THE LANDS DOWN UNDER

On the other side of the world, there are many shops with treasures up-front and outback. **Graham Sharpe** went panning for black'n'silver gold

With a grand-daughter in New Zealand and a long-term friend in Australia, who emigrated as a '£10 Pom', I have more than one excuse to go Antipodean. Each trip provides the opportunity to check out some of the terrific record shops that can be found in these largely English-speaking countries, and I've become acquainted with many such establishments. Making long-distance purchases leads to the occasional problem, such as a Tony Joe White CD acquired from Wellington's excellent **Slow Boat** shop in the Kiwi capital (183, Cuba Street; slowboatrecords.co.nz), which, on returning to London, proved to have no disc in the case. Doh! However, once apprised of that, they quickly sent one. Bonzer!

On a recent sojourn, arriving in Australia, I wandered around Sydney's suburb, Newtown – akin to a somewhat larger London Camden – nipping in and out of some welcoming shops, including **Halcyon Daze** (498a, King Street; halcyondazerecords.com.au) and **Repressed** (413, King Street; repressedrecords.com), which specialises in indie and global underground titles. **Papa Disquo** (109, Enmore Road; vinylworld.org/record-shop/papa-disquo-records) turned up records by John Mayall and Blossom Toes, before I quenched my thirst in Ante (146, King Street; ante.bar), a fine bar whose counter has built-in record decks and shelves groaning under bottles of booze and a serious LP collection for playing on said turntables.

New Zealand also has its own Newtown, outside Wellington, to which a pilgrimage is a *must*. **Creeps Record Parlour** (154a, Riddiford Street; creepsrecords.com) is run by charismatic owner, 'Boss Dude'. Enjoy being refused *any* discount, no matter how many records you buy. Or being turfed off the premises after a couple of minutes: "I have to pick up my kid from school, we're closing." But he loves his shop: "I do it for the scene. Newtown is the biggest songwriting suburb of New Zealand, and I know guys who buy and buy, and *always* listen to their records. Others listen a couple of times, then it goes into the collection." Once his doors re-opened, after school, I bought vinyl by Bo Grumpus, Thomas Edison's Light Bulb Band and John Entwistle.

Another unexpected experience came via **Herb's** (real name, Benjamin James) mobile establishment (herbsrecords@gmail.com), which is a large, brightly painted mobile van in which he wanders New Zealand's North Island, stopping off here and there to sell vinyl en route. I found him parked up in Tawa and relieved him of a 1969 rarity that I'd never seen before, Stonepillow's psych-leaning *Eleazar's Circus*, on Decca's Phase 4 imprint.

**Enjoy being refused discount, no matter how many records you buy!**

Taupo, on the shores of the beautiful Kiwi lake of that name, boasts **My Music** (79, Tongariro Street; djace_1@ xtra.co.nz), offering quality finds, including the beautiful #5052 of Ramones' 2019 concert box set, *It's Alive*, comprising four CDs and two LPs. A snip at NZ$100.

Auckland is well-served with record shops, among which **Real Groovy** (19, Victoria Street West; realgroovy.co.nz) stands out. Owner, Chris Hart, told me: "I always thought that the problem with second-hand record stores was that they often didn't sell new vinyl. But a lot of our customers wanted to trade their old discs for new releases, and that's proved successful. We've had ups and downs and challenges to vinyl over the years, but serious collectors didn't stop buying. We brought artists over here, too, including Townes Van Zandt, Guy Clark, Lucinda Williams, Buddy Guy and Warren Zevon. I served Kurt Cobain in the shop one Sunday in 1992, and Carlos Santana was served by my son."

In Petone, a Wellington suburb, I frequently go to **Lo-Cost Records** (147, Jackson Street; 00 64 4939 2609), where, on my first visit, I spotted the sleeve of a 1969 Shakey Vick LP, featuring old friend and brilliant blues guitarist, the late Bruce Langsman. I took that as an omen and I've continued to shop there regularly. Murray Shaw opened the gaff in 1991, a neighbouring music store owner storming in to say, "You won't last a month." In response, Murray cut his prices: "I was selling new CDs $10 cheaper than him." Some 30-plus years later, Lo-Cost still claim "probably the lowest prices for vinyl in the Wellington region".

In Wainuiomata, **Wonderland** (2, Moores Valley Road; 00 64 4939 7581) is the most eccentric record shop that I know of, anywhere, period. Records are heaped everywhere about its dimly-lit interior and the onus is on the customer to search for vinyl gold. Requesting directions to a specific section receives a vague wave in any direction. If you find something and ask for its price, you can expect: "I don't think you'd be able to afford that," or "that's not something you'd like," from a man with no name behind the counter. Pondering whether to purchase the XTC LP that he and I agreed was worth NZ$50, I saw my grand-daughter entering the shop. My wife couldn't be far away, and I didn't want her to know how much I was spending. Obviously! So, I whispered, "Right, I'll have it. *Quick*!" To which he responded, as she walked in the door, "Yeah, okay, that's $70." Done up like a Kiwi kipper.

Slow Boat in Wellington was founded in 1985 by musician, Dennis O'Brien. As I paid for a live LP by

**Main picture, Egg Records in Sydney, Australia. Above, left: Flying Nun in Wellington, New Zealand, and right: Velvet Fog, Katoomba, Australia**

The Yardbirds, I noticed a display photo of Robert Plant, sporting one of the shop's bags. Jeremy Taylor, the manager, informed me: "Many luminaries visit, including Chris Isaak, Beastie Boys, Radiohead, Sigourney Weaver and Johnny Marr. We also host in-store performances by local faves, like Neil Finn and The Mutton Birds. Kurt Vile was our biggest coup, for *Record Store Day* 2019. We tried to set a gig up, and his tour manager called from the airport to say that he'd do it. Half an hour later, he was playing to a shop full of amazed fans! Dennis passed the reins over to co-owner, Steven Hinderwell, and I, late in 2020. But he still owns the premises – an old Westpac Bank building – and we literally do have a bank vault full of records! Once, there were a dozen music stores on Cuba Street, but now it's just us and Flying Nun, a few doors down."

**Flying Nun** (173, Cuba Street; flyingnun.co.nz) is a shop/record label operation that straddles both the capital and Auckland (202, Karangahape Road). Over 40 years since they launched, the label has issued hundreds of alternative/underground New Zealand artistes' music.

I discovered **Family Jewels Records** (97, Collingwood Street, Nelson; facebook.com/familyjewelsrecords), a bijou vinyl outpost set up by writer, Grant Smithies, and his wife, artist, Josephine Cachemaille, in a beer garden on South Island. Their outlet was founded following the closure of Everyman Records, leaving the town without a vinyl emporium. Grant spotted a location at the Free House pub: "We thought, 'Nelson needs this: it's part of the town's culture'," and he got busy with a crowbar and tore down a wall, working to create the only pub record shop in New Zealand.

Towards the bottom of South Island is Dunedin, where **Relics Music** (86, St Andrew Street; relicsmusic.co.nz) are "purveyors of musical artifacts". The owners are Dave James – 30 years' music retail experience – and his wife, Irene Hundleby, an "ethnomusicologist" with 25-plus years' retail experience. They say: "Relics is a salute to record store culture of the past, and a continuation of that culture into the future."

Up north, back in Oz, I visit Perth and check out **Dada's** (36, Pier Street; facebook.com/dadarecordsperth), established in 1971, and **Urban Records** (117,Oxford Street, Leederville; urbanrecords.com.au), before falling in love with quirky Fremantle. Among its inviting record shops are **Junction Records** (Fremantle Malls, Shop 48, 27-35 William Street; junctionrecords.com.au), proclaiming itself "proudly alternative and fiercely independent" and **Mills Records** (22, Adelaide Street; mills.com.au). Both repay a visit.

I also bought records in Brisbane's **Stash** (557 Old Cleveland Road, Camp Hill; stashrecords.com.au), where they claim, plausibly: "Our mate's mum thinks we're the greatest record store in Australia." Then there's **Rocking Horse Records** (245 Albert Street; rockinghorse.net), an "iconic music haven" in the heart of the city, and **Rockaway Records** (Westfield, Carindale; rockaway.com.au), who have bought and sold vinyl and CDs for 30-plus years. Set up by husband-and-wife team, Scott and Glenyce, it's a 'brother' business of Rockaway Records, Los Angeles.

Back in Sydney's Newtown, **Egg Records** (3, Wilson Street; eggrecords.com) was launched early this century, according to 'Baz', "on a wing and a prayer, and a passion for vinyl long before it was hip again. We also present the Glebe Record Fair twice a year, one of the biggest in Australia. I enjoy that look on customers' faces when they find a Holy Grail that they've been searching for". He recalls Elton John turning up once "out of the blue, and he had a great time buying goodies and telling stories".

A couple of hours' drive outside Sydney are the beautiful Blue Mountains, and **Hat Hill Records** (Shop 6, 23-25, Govett's Leap Road, Blackheath; hathillgallery.com.au), run by Viken Minassian. His teenage goal was to get a job to pay for his record purchases each week, and a lucky break led to his first Blackheath shop, Indigo Duck. An extensive record collection had been abandoned in a house that Vik was clearing out, and he found "thousands of original Blue Note records and others on desirable labels, which sold like hot cakes for $4 each!" Hat Hill followed, and I relieved it of a Kate Bush box set and The Monkees' *Head*.

Also in the Blue Mountains, and since I own a copy of Velvett Fogg's self-titled 1969 album, I loved finding **Velvet Fog** (1/76 Bathurst Road, Katoomba; the velvetfog.com.au). The "record bar" is named after a distinctive climate phenomenon that occasionally affects the locale, rather than the short-lived 'underground' band with a £300-rated LP. But I was delighted to discover an obscure 1967 psych-flavoured LP by Circus Maximus, and I bought vinyl by Bram Stoker, Beggars Opera and Wild Turkey. At the counter, I was greeted with, "Jeez! You've chosen all good 'uns!"

Second-hand specialists, **Licorice Pie** (35, Johnston Street, Collingwood; licoricepie.com), have been going for 20-plus years, and this Melbourne outlet boasts a selection of 15,000 LPs "across a variety of genres, containing rare and classic releases," as founder David Reitman declares. It rounded off a serious trip that requires a commitment of time, effort and money. But record buyers won't regret making a journey down under – there really is a *lot* to plunder!

***See recordstoreday.com.au. Have you been to any other stores down under? Tell us about your experiences via rc.editorial@metropolis.co.uk.***

# The Collector

This month: actors
**Sam and Freya Parks**

**Family jewels: Freya and Sam Parks with some choice pieces from their collections**

**Sam Parks and Freya Parks, who live in London, are father and daughter, and both working actors. They first shared musical tastes listening to cassettes in the car, Sam passing on his favourites to Freya and then vice versa: Sam would never have come across Warpaint or Fever Ray without Freya, and Freya would never have come across Radiohead if it hadn't been for Sam and his iPod that she'd "borrow" and take to school with her every day. Sam was never in a band at school but has been thrilled to watch Freya play bass in various bands and shows over the years. Sam's collection includes funk, pop, jazz, metal and rock. Freya's collection includes rock, ska, psychedelic rock, folk, punk, northern soul and Motown.**

**What do you collect, and why?**
**Sam:** A very simple answer from me: Prince. I have to rein myself in (do I really need that Japanese import of Glam Slam on 12"? Yes, I probably do!) but I've got all the 12" singles I now want and all the Prince LP releases on vinyl, plus some of his protégé and collaborative projects. The other large components of my collection are Blondie, AC/DC, Sparks and The Rolling Stones. I suppose there is a completist sensibility running through me, but I'm not an obsessive – see *The Black Album* below. I like records, I like the weight and feel and smell of them! I also think the scale of them is really appealing – they are just the right size for an artist to express their vision or style or ideas on the sleeve. So much album artwork has entered our DNA: they are as evocative as a lyric or a tune or a beat.

## "I LIKE THE WEIGHT AND FEEL AND SMELL OF RECORDS!"

**Freya:** Over the last couple of years, I've really got into collecting ska and rocksteady. It all started because of the research I was doing for my role in *This Town* where I play Fiona, who works in a record shop [the fictional Minerva Discs, based on Birmingham's Virgin Records], goes to rocksteady dances on the weekends and becomes the bass player in the show's fictional band. It quickly became an obsession and so every time I'm in a record shop or a market, anywhere in the UK, I find myself scouring for 7"s and LPs that have anything to do with ska/2 Tone/rocksteady. I am also a huge Warpaint fan and a proud owner of all their records. I'm definitely building up a pretty solid Frank Zappa collection, too! It's so special holding a physical object that's a work of art in itself, made by people you respect and admire. It also sounds better – believe the hype. That's why I choose vinyl as the ultimate music listening experience.

**How big is your collection?**
**Sam:** Around 700 LPs, I think, based on a rough count.
**Freya:** Somewhere in the region of 100-200. I'm very keen to keep it growing!

**What do you think it is worth?**
**Sam:** I'm not absolutely sure but in the region of a few thousand pounds.
**Freya:** Not too sure but possibly coming up to the thousands.

**How and where do you store it?**
**Sam:** In my wardrobe (not ideal!) and in ICube storage boxes (more ideal!). I'm not fanatically precious about keeping my records in pristine condition. Most are secondhand or well-used anyway and the sleeves probably wouldn't benefit from a plastic protector – the damage has been done! I do love a plastic sleeve and really appreciate it when a purchase from eBay is well-packaged and includes a sleeve.
**Freya:** I've been moving about recently so I had kept them on shelves and a homemade table/shelf unit thing that my record player rested on, but now I aim to get some of those plastic storage boxes. Dad bought me one for my 7" collection and it works a treat!

**What's the rarest/most unusual/most valuable item you have?**
**Sam:** I've got a 1963 mono pressing of *Meet The Beatles*, which is quite valuable, but more surprisingly my 12" Little Red Corvette/Horny Toad by Prince is worth more. When I started to dip my toes into selling on eBay I was a bit green and didn't know much about run-off matrix numbers and pressings etc. I sold what I thought was an A1-B1 Rolling Stones *Exile On Main St* and received a furious reply in my inbox. I had missold the item and the buyer ripped into me. I did the right thing and immediately apologised and issued a refund – and then we actually had a lovely inbox conversation about record collecting and pressings. The buyer told me that even though he now didn't want my copy of *EOMS*, I did have an unusual edition because the cover had been misprinted and there are people out there in the record collecting community who collect errors and anomalies.
**Freya:** I don't think it's very rare but it's certainly unusual in true Frank Zappa fashion: it's the triple box set of *Thing-Fish* by Zappa. I love it because it's bonkers and says it's a cast recording of a proposed musical that was only performed after his death. Would've loved to have seen that!

**What elusive gem are you still looking for?**
**Sam:** Well, I'd love *The Black Album* by Prince – there are loads of dodgy copies out there of which I am the proud owner, but one of the 400 or so original pressings would be fantastic – however, I'm reluctant to fork out the £1,000-plus price tag…
**Freya:** A few years ago, I was in Rat Records in Camberwell which has now unfortunately closed down and I spotted *Act One* by Beggar's Opera that I'd never heard of, but the fact that they were a Glaswegian psychedelic-progressive rock band from the 70s had me hooked. I took

**Slits** – *Return Of The Giant Slits*
(CBS 85269, LP with bonus 45, UK, 1981)
Estimated market value: **£40**

**Mickey Jupp** – *Mickey Jupp's Legend* (Stiff GET 2, LP, UK, 1979)
Estimated market value: **£10**

**AC/DC** – *Let There Be Rock*
(Atlantic K 50366, LP, UK, 1977)
Estimated market value: **£30**

**The Beatles** – *With The Beatles*
(Parlophone PMC 1206, Mono LP, UK, 1963)
Estimated market value: **£200**

the sleeve to the front desk and was ready to pay the incredibly reasonable price. But after a few minutes of searching round the back, they said there'd been a mistake and they didn't actually have the record! The guy working at the shop shared my heartbreak, both of us understanding that it was a pretty special find and, ever since, I've been searching the shelves of record shops across the land to find a copy – ideally one that won't break the bank. Like father, like daughter! I also definitely need to get more Pulp records because I am obsessed.

**What's given you the biggest thrill?**
**Sam:** Buying the 7" single of Sunday Girl by Blondie with my own money was a moment. And I was thrilled to sell the flaming red boot LP by Mickey Jupp's Legend for around £400. I'd inherited it from my dad and kept it for a while, but I had another Mickey Jupp LP, so sadly let 'The Flaming Red Boot' go – it was very nice to have the money at that point.
**Freya:** I got given *Return Of The Giant Slits* by the art department for *This Town* as a wrap present. It was an album I requested to feature in Fiona's record shop as it came out the same year *This Town* is set [1981] and because, on a personal level, The Slits have been a major inspiration for me, as a female musician myself. I also got quite a thrill when I found Relaxed Muscle's *The Heavy* from Rough Trade, as I'm a massive fan of anything Jarvis Cocker does. Finding Cockney Rebel's *The Psychomodo* was a bit of a special moment, too.

**How do you track stuff down?**
**Sam:** Mainly eBay, except some of the Prince stuff which I have purchased through Rock It Poole, a fantastic record shop in Poole, Dorset which sells everything but specialises in Prince.
**Freya:** Mainly from record shops, merch stands at gigs or straight from the artists' websites – like the recent release of Warpaint's 7", Common Blue.

**What's your favourite record shop?**
**Sam:** I remember coming up to London on Saturdays from Kent when I was still at school and visiting Tower Records on Piccadilly Circus, that cathedral of recorded music. Later, I was at university in Exeter and there was a tiny record shop off Fore St – I think it became The Bike Shed Theatre later on – and they did a lot of bootlegs… I remember I got the Prince *Clubbing It* live LP there and they were also fantastically well-stocked with 12" singles. It was that time in the 80s when everyone was releasing endless remixes of singles.
**Freya:** Growing up in London, I loved heading into Soho after school and doing the little tour of Sister Ray, Reckless Records, Sounds Of The Universe etc. They hold great memories of discovering certain types of music and bands for the first time, even before I was going to gigs. Recently, I came across Cliffs during a trip to Margate, which I loved. It's a cafe/record shop and has a really gorgeous grass roots community vibe. Feels like a proper creative hub. Found a 1981 reissue of *Diamond Dogs* in there for a very good price, and the coffee and brunch were delicious! Another goldmine is the Music & Video Exchange in Notting Hill. Such bargains, and the place where I found a lot of my ska 45s, such as My Sound That Goes Around by Prince Buster & His Torch Lighters and Pressure Drop by Toots & The Maytals.

**How often do you listen to your collection?**
**Sam:** I usually play something every day. As I'm writing this, I'm listening to Barclay James Harvest's first album.
**Freya:** Definitely weekly, but once I've set up my record player in my bedroom, I'll be playing something every day for sure.

**Is there a visual side to collecting for you? Have you ever bought a record for the sleeve alone, or for a picture disc?**
**Sam:** For artists I love, the visual side is not that important because I will buy it anyway, but a terrific cover will certainly catch my eye. I do like an interactive record sleeve: I have a copy of the Faces' *Ooh La La*, which has a gentleman in a top hat whose eyes and chin waggle when you press the sides of the sleeve. I used to have the brilliant Zippo lighter sleeve for Bob Marley & The Wailers' *Catch A Fire* which I shouldn't have sold. I like the look of picture discs, but I find that they often don't sound great.
**Freya:** I love buying records just for the cover. It could be an absolute gem! Bette Midler's *Thighs And Whispers* is one of those. The cover is brilliant and so of its time – beautifully camp and kitsch! It also happens to be a gem sonically…

**How will you eventually dispose of your collection?**
**Sam:** Er…. Freya?!
**Freya:** Well, thanks, Dad! Yes, I will happily take them off your hands when the time comes. Not just yet, though. We've still got many years of discovering and listening to music together.

**What's your all-time favourite record, regardless of value or rarity?**
**Sam:** Probably *Let There Be Rock* by AC/DC – when I was about 11 my dad introduced me to them and passed on his record. I've still got it – but I have another copy, too.
**Freya:** Warpaint's EP, *Exquisite Corpse* – it was one of the first records I bought for myself and it reminds me why I fell in love with bass playing and when I formed my first band at school. Dad and I actually discovered them at the same time – we were watching Jools Holland back in 2010 and we were about to go to bed when suddenly these four incredibly cool women took to the stage and played Elephants [one of the songs from their EP]. We were utterly transfixed.

***Sam can be seen in an episode of* Renegade Nell *on Disney+ and appears in season 2 of Amazon's* Lord Of The Rings: Rings Of Power. *Freya is in BBC One's sitcom,* Here We Go, *on BBC iPlayer, and stars in* This Town, *Stephen Knight's drama set in 1981 at the birth of 2 Tone, also on BBC iPlayer.***

**Prince – Little Red Corvette (Full Length Version)** (Warners W 9436T, 12", UK, 1983)
Estimated market value: **£80**

**Faces – *Ooh La La***
(Warners K 56011, LP, UK, 1973)
Estimated market value: **£90**

**Barclay James Harvest – *Barclay James Harvest*** (Harvest SHVL 770, LP, UK, 1970)
Estimated market value: **£25**

**Bette Midler – *Thighs And Whispers***
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# VALUE ADDED FACTS

**Ian Shirley, Editor Emeritus of the *Rare Record Price Guide*, answers your questions**

**Fats chance: the UK version of *"Fats" Sadi's Combo* (left) and the American release (right)**

## FATS PROFIT

I recently inherited a small collection from my great grandfather. There were only about 100 records passed down to me and most were 50s charity shop fodder by the likes of Dickie Valentine, Tab Hunter and Frank Sinatra. Some were 10" LPs which, despite my collecting since the 90s, I had never come across before. There is only one that piqued my interest due, I suppose, to its obscurity. It is *"Fats" Sadi's Combo* by "Fats" Sadi's Combo. It's in a very glossy sleeve that is VG to VG+ and the vinyl is in a similar condition. It's on the Vogue label. Any information about Mr Sadi and the value of the record would be most appreciated. There is nothing in your otherwise excellent *Rare Record Price Guide*.

**Norman Fields via email**

*Pol Sadi Lallemand was born in Belgium in 1927 and fell under the thrall of legendary trumpeter Louis Armstrong when he was around 12 years old. This made him want to become a musician and, at one time, he played the xylophone in a circus. By 1941, inspired by Louis Hampton, he adopted the vibraphone as his main instrument. Lallemand turned professional and by 1950 moved to Paris where he would be based until 1961. As Lallemand meant "the German" in French, he became known professionally as "Fats" Sadi.*

*Taken with the work of modernist American vibes player, Milt Jackson, Sadi began to establish himself on the scene. He not only played in the Club St Germain and the Ringside in Paris but toured France and Europe. As well as working with European jazz musicians such as fellow countrymen saxophone player Bobby Jaspar and guitarist Django Reinhart, Sadi played with American legends, tenor sax player Don Byas and drummer Kenny Clarke. Sadi began to appear as a sideman on recordings, and made his debut as a leader in 1954 on* "Fats" Sadi's Combo. *The album was recorded in Paris on 8 May 1954 with a line-up of Sadi (vibes), Bobby Jaspar (saxophone), Nat Peck (Trombone), Maurice Vandair (piano), Jean-Louis Viale (drums), Jean-Marie Ingrand (bass), Roger Guérin (trumpet/tuba) and Jean Aldegon (bass clarinet). Guérin and Viale had been voted the best French trumpeter and drummer in France's* Jazz Hot *magazine in 1954 so the standard of playing was high on tracks such as Karin, Big Balcony, Ridin' High and Sadisme. The session was released in France on the new 10" LP format on the Vogue label (LD 212, £150) who were championing European jazz artists.* "Fats" Sadi's Combo *was also issued on Vogue's UK subsidiary which is the version that you have (LDE 133, £175).*

*This was an early manifestation of the emerging LP format. It is incredibly hard to find with the thin laminated cover intact and in Mint condition as well as on flawless vinyl. Also, as jazz buyers in France and the UK favoured original American recordings over British and European artists not many copies were sold.* "Fats" Sadi's Combo *was also released on the emerging Blue Note label in America (BLP 5061) with a different cover and liner notes by legendary jazz critic Leonard Feather. This is the rarest, most collectable version, worth in the region of £350-400 in Mint condition. The exact replica 10" reissue put out in Japan (BVJJ 2943) in 1997 is worth £20.*

*Sadi's career continued with many more recordings and at one time he even had his own TV show in his native Belgium. For those looking to explore his early music, there's a 2022 compilation CD,* Sadi's Vibes (A Retrospective 1953-1961) *(Fresh Sounds FSRCD 1123, Spain, £20), that features the entire* "Fats" Sadi's Combo *LP. Sadi's second LP as a leader –* Ensadinado – *was not released until 1966 (SABA SB 15111 ST, Germany, £200). Though this LP has yet to be re-pressed, two of its standout tracks – Ensadinado/Night Lady – were recently issued as a 7" (WB 013, 2021) on the excellent UK jazz label WallenBink.*

## PRETTY VACANT

There's an album I picked up in the 80s in America that I'd like to try to find out more about. It is by a band called The Pretty People and it's lovely, baroque, vocal-harmony pop. It came out in 1969 on the Crestview label and was sadly the group's only release. Can you shed any light on the people behind it as well as some kind of valuation?

**Oswald Reed via email**

*Sadly, not much is known about The Pretty People. The main drivers of this American harmony group were songwriters, Denny Gore and Bobby Adano. Whether they assembled the group as well as writing their songs is unknown but The Pretty People were signed by Crestview Records who operated out of Los Angeles and were owned by Randy Wood (former president of Vee Jay Records) and run by Fred Smith. The full line-up of The Pretty People were Milo Peerpont (vocals), Denny Gore (piano/vocals), Judy Morss (vocals), Lynseed Lavender (vocals) and Steve Venem (vocals). The musicians who played on the recording sessions were Mike Anthony (guitar), Mike Barone (trombone), Danny Bryant (harmonica), Jay DaVersa (trumpet), Jim Cannon (bass) and Bobby Morin (drums).*

*A single, Just For Today/Going To San Diego (CR 9012, US, £10), was issued in 1969.* The Pretty People *LP (CRS 3056, US) was released the same year. How well it sold is unknown; Crestview was a small label and only issued about a dozen releases between 1969 and 1970 before folding. Saying that,* The Pretty People *was actually licensed and sold in Italy with the same catalogue number (£100). As time progressed, the US version of the album became sought-after as an excellent example of finely played and arranged sunshine pop. The album has never been reissued, which means that a Mint copy of the original US pressing is also worth in the region of* £100.

## QUIDS IN, SQUIRE

I was a big Stone Roses fan and, of course, followed the solo careers of Ian Brown, John Squire and Mani's adventures with Primal Scream. I was disappointed that after The Seahorses, John Squire only made two solo albums – *Time Changes Everything* and *Marshall's House*. He was such a gifted musician. I am delighted that he has hooked up with Liam Gallagher on a sensational collaboration. I wonder if his reappearance has increased the value of the two solo LPs I bought on vinyl when they came out in 2002 and 2004.

**Flynn Armstrong**

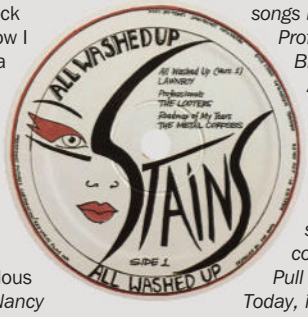
*You did very well indeed to buy those two solo John Squire LPs on vinyl at the time of their release. As you state, Squire was the guitarist with the legendary Stone Roses who remain one of the greatest UK bands. When The Stone Roses imploded, Squire was quick to form a new band, The Seahorses, who scored four Top 20 singles in 1997. Their album,* Do It Yourself, *went to No 2. As this was a time when CD was the dominant format, only a small number of copies were pressed on vinyl (Geffen GEF 25134) which makes a Mint copy worth £150. The 2022 reissue (Music On Vinyl MOVLP 3040) is worth £20. A second Seahorses LP was recorded but remains unreleased.*

*John Squire's solo career kicked off in 2002 with the album Time Changes Everything, which peaked at No 17 that September, and the single Joe Louis/ Home Sweet Home (North Country Records NC 001, 7", £3) which went Top 50 in November. Of course, most copies of the album were sold on CD; only a limited number were pressed as a 2LP set (NCLP 001). The same applied to the 2004 follow-up* Marshall's House *(NCLP 003), which only spent one week in the album chart at No 90. A third solo LP was recorded but remains unreleased. As an aside for collectors, the only other LP released on North Country was Shack's fourth album …*Here's Tom With The Weather *(NCLP 002), which is worth a whopping £200.*

*As for the two John Squire LPs, in the current edition of the* Rare Record Price Guide, *they are valued at £35 (*Time Changes Everything*) and £30 (*Marshall's House*). That they have not been re-pressed since release, combined with renewed interest in Squire's work after his wondrous collaboration with Liam Gallagher, has increased demand and so both have since risen to £60. Finally, his website johnsquire.com is dedicated to his visual art rather than his music.*

## STAIN ON RECORD

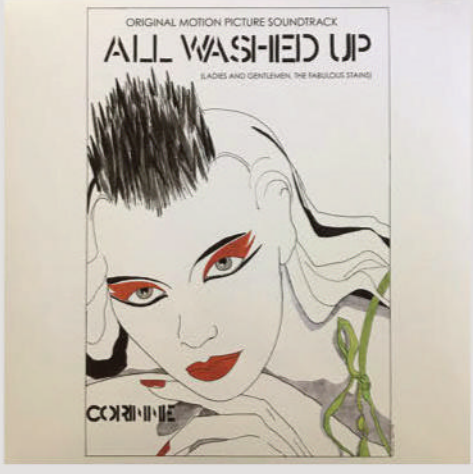
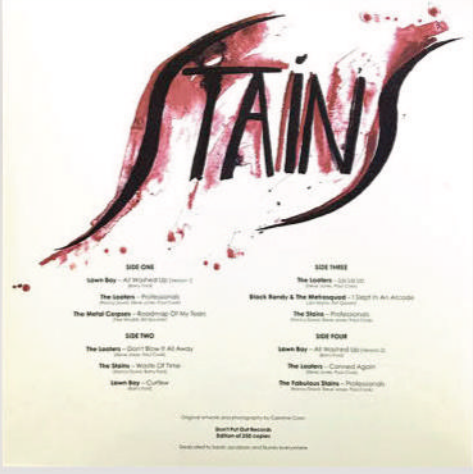
I have never understood why the soundtrack to *Ladies And Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains* was not released back in 1982. After all, most of the soundtrack for this film was written by former Sex Pistols Steve Jones and Paul Cook who appeared in the film as members of The Looters along with The Clash's Paul Simonon on bass and Ray Winstone on lead vocals! I was working in America at this time and remember seeing the film and thinking it was great especially as the story revolved around a female punk rock singer who fronted The Stains. Now I know they and The Looters were a fictional band but the music was solid gold. Also the Sex Pistols and The Clash were, and remain, massive bands whose music still sounds better to me than most other bands'. Any light on this would be appreciated.




**Malcolm Penny via email**

Ladies And Gentleman, The Fabulous Stains *was based on a script by Nancy Down with input from famed UK music writer Caroline Coon. The story revolved around an all-female punk band who conquered the music world. The film was directed by former music producer Lou Adler and, as you correctly state, featured Paul Simonon, Paul Cook and Steve Jones in supporting roles to the main actors who included a very young Ray Winstone. The Fabulous Stains break out after a support slot on a tour headlined by The Metal Corpses (fronted by Fee Waybill of The Tubes) and The Looters. As you might imagine Cook, Jones, Winstone, Waybill and Simonon had a lot of fun making the film as well as recording songs for the soundtrack. Sadly* Ladies And Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains *received a very limited release in America in October 1982 and apparently only took $25,000 at the box office. With no international distribution there was also no soundtrack album. Lest we forget, at this time artists such as The Human League, Survivor, Lionel Ritchie, and The J Geils Band were hot acts in America. As time went on, however, the film picked up a cult audience and was cited as being influential on the riot grrrl movement of the 90s.*

*As for the music, there were four songs by The Looters: Professionals, La La La, Don't Blow It All Away and Conned Again. There were also tracks by The Stains, Lawn Boy and The Metal Corpses. In 2008 Rhino finally released the soundtrack digitally. In 2019 a 2LP set of the soundtrack, limited to 250 copies, was pressed by Don't Pull Out Records on red vinyl. Today, it's worth in the region of £175. Whether there is to be a more widespread release remains unknown though the four tracks by The Looters have been released as a bootleg 12" in Germany with a delicious picture sleeve of Winstone, Cook, Jones and Simonon. Those who want these tracks legally are directed to* The Complete Professionals *(Virgin 4745677, 3CD, 2015, £40) which also includes that other lovely amalgamation of punk legends, The Sham Pistols, made up of Jimmy Pursey, Dave Tredegar, Steve Jones and Paul Cook.* Ladies and Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains *has been re-released on DVD and can also be purchased on platforms such as Prime Video.*



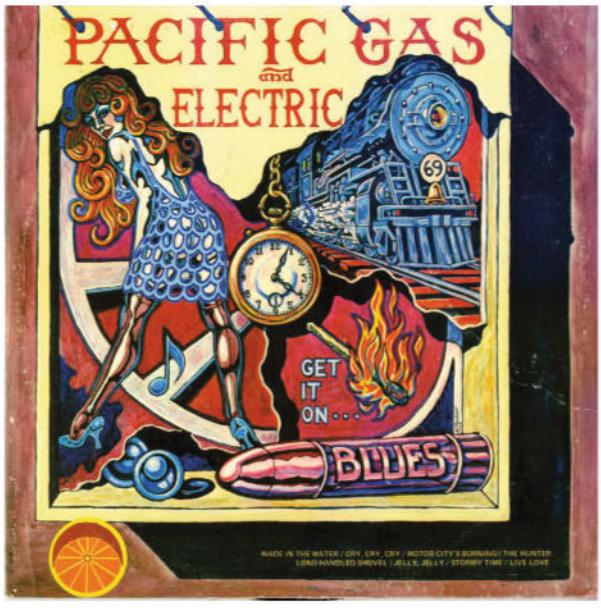
## LOW ENERGY PRICES

Got an interesting question over formats. I have two copies of the debut LP by the band Pacific Gas And Electric. What I find curious is that one is in a gatefold sleeve whereas the other is in a non-gatefold sleeve. They are also on different labels, the gatefold version on Bright Orange and the single-sleeved version on United. Can you solve this mystery?

**Peter Williams via email**

*The Pacific Gas And Electric Blues Band formed in Los Angeles in 1967. The line-up was Tom Marshall (guitar), Brent 'Boogie' Block (bass), Glenn Schwartz (guitar), Frank Cook (drums) and Charlie Allen (vocals). The band began to gig on the local scene playing blues and soul and soon shortened their name to Pacific Gas And Electric. They were signed to Power Records, a subsidiary of Cadet. The band's debut LP,* Get It On*, was released in America in 1968. This release (P 701, £35), pictured left, came in a gatefold sleeve. The album did not sell strongly and Cadet also received a legal challenge over its use of the name Power Records and so renamed it Bright Orange. Thus, Bright Orange reissued* Get It On *in 1969, again in a gatefold sleeve. This (BO 701, £20) is the first version that you own. The inside of the gatefold featured a photo of the band along with some pithy comments by each member – eg, Marshall: "Subversion is the tool of change. Intolerance is the key to destruction. Have faith in men everywhere."*

*By the time this version of the LP was released, Pacific Gas And Electric had signed to Columbia Records and issued* Pacific Gas And Electric *(CS 9900, US, £20). The LP got into the* Billboard *Top 100 and charted in Australia. The other version of* Get It On *that you own, pictured right, on the United label in a single sleeve (US 7762), was a budget reissue probably put out in the US some time in 1970. It's worth around £15 and features a tracklist on the front. By the way,* Get It On *was also issued in the UK in 1970 on the B&C label (CAS 1003) with a different front cover. This version is the rarest and is worth £75.*



**Send your Value Added Facts questions to ian.shirley@metropolis.co.uk or by post to the new *RC* address. www.rarerecordpriceguide.com**

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## COME ON! COME ON!

### LITTLE EVA

### LIIIlocomotion

*(London HAU 8036, mono, plum label, laminated sleeve, LP, UK, 1963)* **£30**

Little Eva's The Loco-Motion was one of *the* records of 1962, hitting No 1 in the US and No 2 in Britain. A backstory was prepared for publicity purposes – and, as is so often the case, it wasn't wholly true. Some of it was: Eva Boyd was indeed live-in nanny to husband-and-wife songwriters Gerry Goffin and Carole King. But the story about King playing a tune on the piano at home, Eva starting to dance, and Goffin being reminded of a railway train and quickly working out a lyric – no. Goffin and King had been approached by music publisher Don Kirshner to produce a follow-up to Dee Dee Sharp's hit Mashed Potato Time – they came up with The Loco-Motion, and, knowing their nanny could sing, asked her to demo it.

According to some sources, the song was offered to Sharp, who rejected it, while others say that Kirshner was so taken with Little Eva's version that he decided to put it out. At any rate, Kirshner formed his own label – Dimension – and got a smash hit. At the time, many American hits were covered by UK outfits, and The Vernons Girls, fresh from their two-sided hit Lover Please/ You Know What I Mean, cut a version. Both Loco-Motions entered the UK chart the first week of September, Little Eva at No 42, The Vernons at No 47. The next week, Little Eva had jumped to No 25, The Vernons were nowhere. And Little Eva just kept climbing, kept off the top only by The Tornados' Telstar.

Though the song proclaimed "Everybody's doing a brand-new dance now," when it was written there was no actual dance. Eva made up her steps when she performed the song onstage. Despite this, several records would follow with "Locomotion" in the title, both vocal (Terry Randazzo's Twistin' To The Locomotion) and instrumental (The Tornados' Locomotion With Me, Duane Eddy's Loco-Locomotion, Sounds Incorporated's Sounds Like Locomotion).

Next, the label issued a cash-in LP: Little Eva's *LIIIloco-Motion*. It had a lot going for it: Gerry Goffin producing, good musicians (including crack sax player Art Kaplan, whose solo was one of the hit's plus points) and strong songs, mostly cover versions of hits. Seven of the 12 numbers were Goffin/King compositions.

Loco-Motion B-side, He Is The Boy, written by Goffin and Dee Erwin (of whom, more later) was included, as were covers of The Drifters (Some Kind-A Wonderful, Up On The Roof), Bobby Vee (Sharing You and Run To Her [Him]) and The Shirelles (Will You Love Me Tomorrow). Some stayed close to the originals (The Crystals' Uptown), but others had a different slant to them: Will You Love Me Tomorrow was in a different tempo, Run To Her had an introduction missing from the Bobby Vee hit, and Breaking Up Is Hard To Do had a distinctive sax break instead of the choral passage in the Neil Sedaka original. I Have A Love, from *West Side Story*, gave Eva the chance to show off her remarkable vocal range.

It was a strong album, and would be raided for B-sides for future singles. Eva's follow-up 45, Keep Your Hands Off My Baby, another Goffin-King number, was a good song, but lacked the instant appeal of its predecessor. It got to No 12 in America, but the British public wasn't so keen. *Juke Box Jury* panellist Helen Shapiro began by saying she "thoroughly enjoyed" the previous record, but had her doubts about this one. In Britain (London HLU 9633) it stalled at No 30. On the back was a Goffin/King album track, the mournful Where Do I Go.

The next US single coupled Let's Turkey Trot – Goffin and King's homage to a dance from the early 1900s – with the album track Down Home, a slow, nostalgic Goffin/King number reminiscent of Leroy Van Dyke's 1961 hit, Walk On By. In the UK Let's Turkey Trot was coupled with the next American A-side, Old Smokey Loco-Motion: a rewrite (by Goffin and King) of On Top Of Old Smokey (HLU 9687). This made for a very good two-sider, and both sides got airplay, with Let's Turkey Trot reaching No 13. (The American flip of Old Smokey Loco-Motion, Just a Little Girl, was a new track.)

But – other than reissues (see below) – Little Eva wouldn't (officially) have any more UK hits. In late 1963 the aforementioned Dee Erwin (as Big Dee Irwin) made the UK Top 10 with his rocking version of the old Bing Crosby song, Swinging On A Star. Irwin sang the verses and refrain, with interjections from an uncredited Little Eva, who certainly spiced up the record. The flip, Goffin and King's Another Night With The Boys (originally recorded by The Drifters), featured Eva even more prominently – Irwin sang the first verse, Eva the second, and they sang the bridge and third verse together. Criminally, only Irwin was credited.

There would be more good records, but no chart success. In 1964 a rather silly novelty record was put out, Makin' With The Magilla – a reference to Magilla Gorilla, star of a Hanna-Barbera cartoon series that ran from 1963 to 1965. It was issued on both sides of the Atlantic (Colpix PX 11035 in the UK), coupled with yet another album track, Run To Her.

In 1972, London re-released both The Loco-Motion single (same catalogue number and flip) and the album, in stereo (SHU 8437), in the UK. And The Loco-Motion became a hit all over again, reaching No 11. In 1986 it was reissued once more, in a picture sleeve (London LOCO 1), and made it to No 87 (on the B-side were Let's Turkey Trot and He Is The Boy). In 1989 an extended version was issued as a 12" single (LOCOX 1), with a third track on the B-side, Keep Your Hands Off My Baby.

The album is easy to find on CD, and there have been several compilations, the best-value being *LIIIlittle Eva! The Complete Dimension Recordings* (Westside WESM 512, 1997). It omits the 12" version of The Loco-Motion but includes all the other tracks (including those with Big Dee Irwin) – as well as very informative notes by Mick Patrick and Malcolm Baumgart.

Little Eva died in 2003 from pancreatic cancer, at 59. She left behind a record that's regarded as a classic, and still sounds fresh – and a whole lot of lesser-known numbers well worth investigating.

**Simon Euan-Smith**

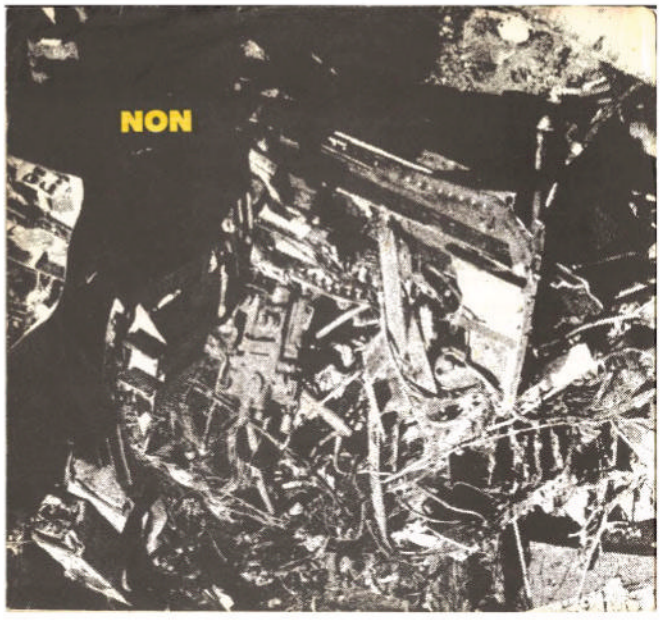
***LIIIloco-Motion is currently available on vinyl as Not Now Music CATLP 228, UK, £14***

# OH BOYD

## NON

## Mode Of Infection/Knife Ladder

*(Private press MR 00, single-sided 7", USA, 1979)* **£50**




"Multi axis, Multi speed. Soundtracks designed for play at 16, 33, 45, and 78. Engineered to permit remixing at home. Maximal volume suggested. This record is absolutely unbreakable" . So the cover to this single boasts. A selfie-master before the selfie, NON's leading man, Boyd Rice, has been dividing opinion for decades. Even hardcore fans are puzzled by his in-a-blink pendulum swinging from conceptual genius to brazen opportunist. confusion that Mr Rice merrily encourages. From wearing long, faux-military leather coats (think *'Allo 'Allo*'s Herr Flick) and questionable haircuts to claiming the position of the figurehead of the lounge revival, then changing into shorts and sipping cocktails, Rice is commendably consistent in his self-assertions.

This single – recorded under the banner of NON, the experimental noise/performance project Rice formed in the 70s – is his "career definer". As is so often with the best of art, Rice discovered his modus operandi and working tool, the skipping record, by accident rather than intent. And Mode Of Infection, a one-sided, self-released single, features many concepts that Rice would recycle over the years. The loops and hand-drilled additional holes in the label to allow off-centre playing and a cover urging record buyers to play the single at all possible speeds is anarchic free-form avant-gardism to the max.

Whereas most people consider NON a Boyd Rice solo project, the influence of Rice's partner, Robert Turman, on these early recordings should not be underestimated. On this single, Turman provides noise, tapes and drums, while Rice adds voice and plays the Rotoguitar – a contraption consisting of an electric fan mounted on a guitar, creating a wall of noise. As such, Mode Of Infection is a bona fide industrial music classic. And, as a surprise bonus, you get no fewer than three uncredited loops, Soundtrack #1, #2 and #3, to endlessly annoy your neighbours.

The few copies of Mode Of Infection sold quickly, paving the way for a continuum, albeit temporary, of NON-brilliance. Records such as Pagan Muzak (a 7" single featuring scratched loops packed in an LP cover), *Rise* (the soundtrack to a car accident) and *Easy Listening For The Hard Of Hearing* (an LP recorded with Frank Tovey and anything but) are all worth anyone's attention. Not to mention Rice's eponymous first album, known as *The Black Album* for its completely black cover. Mute Records reissued the 1977 album, actually their first release, in 1981 and it has been on catalogue since – not bad for an album featuring music solely created out of skipping records. An intriguing and worthwhile collection of further early efforts by Boyd Rice can be found on the excellent 5LP box set, *Archival Rarities 1975-1981,* on the Vinyl-On-Demand label (VOD 149, Germany, 2016, £120). In the enclosed liner notes, Mr Rice tries to convince you, in his typical fashion, that he created several musical genres while having breakfast. Still, these early works almost convince me he really did!

**Freek Kinkelaar**

# Vintage Venue

A regular look at unsung haunts near you

**No 53: The Troubadour, Bristol**

It operated for just five years (1966-71), but during that time The Troubadour, in the Clifton area of Bristol, played host to many up-and-coming folk acts and acquired a lasting reputation. Al Stewart mentioned it in his Clifton In The Rain, and in 2016 a Troubadour 50th anniversary concert was held at St George's in Bristol, including some of the acts that had appeared there.

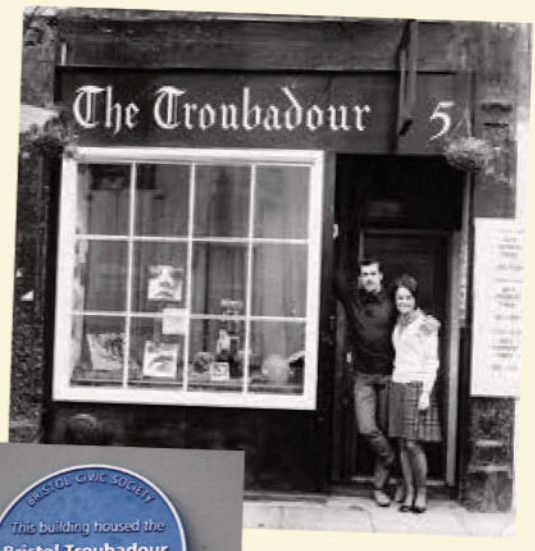
It was the brainchild of Ray Willmott and his wife, Barbara (pictured in front of the club). Returning to Bristol after a few years in Australia, Ray felt that "a club run on commercial lines was badly needed," and set about looking for premises, eventually deciding on No 5, Waterloo Street, Clifton. One of his criteria was that it had to be near the university, which proved a shrewd decision – in an interview, Ray reckoned that students of the area formed "probably 80% of the audience". He also insisted that it would not be licensed, a decision that several questioned. But Ray stuck to it, explaining that in his experience licensed clubs were far too noisy and it was impossible to hear the artists.

Ray admitted that on the opening night – 7 October 1966 – he was worried that there might not be enough punters to pay the performers, he and Barbara having sunk all their savings into the project. But the punters came – and the club's reputation rapidly grew. Apart from Al Stewart, acts appearing there included the Strawbs, Dave Swarbrick and Martin Carthy, Keith Christmas and Ian A Anderson, Al Jones and Elliot Jackson – the last-named three of whom put out a highly collectable, self-titled five-track EP (Saydisc 33SD 125, 1967, £100)

Today's Health and Safety guardians would be horrified at the set-up: some nights the place would be packed like a tin of sardines. It was all pretty primitive – the lavatories were just off the auditorium ("Bloody sewage!" Keith Christmas once exclaimed when a loud flush drowned out his between-songs patter). But the small, intimate setting appealed to many of the performers – when the Strawbs appeared there in May 1969, leader Dave Cousins quickly established a rapport with the audience, and their set was superb. The following year the band appeared at the Colston Hall, and Cousins seemed rather overwhelmed. Incidentally, the Strawbs' self-titled debut album was issued a few days after their Troubadour appearance, and many Bristol students bought it.

The Willmotts sold up in 1969, to return to Australia, and the club finally closed its doors two years later. But, in addition to the blue plaque that now commemorates it, the memory of this great venue lives on.

**Simon Euan-Smith**



***Read Ian A Anderson's Bristol Troubadour history at ianaanderson.com/bristol-troubadour.***

***If you know of an unsung music venue or defunct record shop, send 3-400 words on the subject – with a venue/shop pic or scanned memorabilia – to rc.content@metropolis.co.uk***

# LABEL OF LOVE

## ALTERCAT RECORDS

Q&A **Label boss:** Sergi Roig
**Interview:** Paul Bowler

Hepcat: Sergi Roig in his home office/label HQ, Berlin, 2023

**Where are you based, what do you do, and why?**
Altercat is based in Berlin, releasing music in several directions but with a common denominator: my own relationship to music and different cultures over the years. I originally started the label with that intention, promoting new artists but also highlighting artists from past decades whom I feel deserve more attention.

**Why the name?**
It hints at the kaleidoscopic approach to music, deliberately staying away from a name that would tie the label to a specific style or genre. Altercat is the Catalan word for "altercation", so at the same time it's a link to my roots and another hint at non-compliance.

**When did you launch the label and how have things changed since?**
2016. It started slowly, naturally, with more activity in the last three years or so. The focus has shifted a bit from contemporary artists to rediscoveries of albums through well curated reissues. We put a lot of attention into detail and I think it shows. Stylistically it feels as if Altercat had dropped a bit the guitar sounds of some previous releases (The Bogeymen or Rag I Ryggen, for example) in favour of multi-flavoured jazz and more organic sounds. And there are two trends in the last few albums we've put out: the lush jazz scene in 70s Argentina and Brazilian music recorded outside Brazil.

**What were your influences?**
Possibly Sundazed and Guerssen. The former was one of the first labels I followed and it fed my interest in 60s garage and psychedelia when I was a teenager. I've known Guerssen since the beginning; we've been friends forever and I've seen them grow from a small, home-made, one-man enterprise to what they are today.

**Who are your competitors?**
Mr Bongo or Far Out obviously spring to mind, but I'd rather see most of us as a team. We all make this possible. There's other labels doing similar work, and Altercat wasn't the first in the game. But even in bigger labels targeting the same audience there's a component of love – they are into the music and love what they do. I have more than once lost a project I was excited about to another label, but I'm actually happy someone has brought that music back to life, even if it hasn't been Altercat.

**Any advice for someone who wants to start their own label?**
Know the music, be nice to the artists!

**What's been your highest high?**
I think the re-release of Werther's album. Not only because it's been very well received, but because of the effect it had on a personal level for several of the people who made the music possible back then. Most of all Werther, who started making music again. Stay tuned for Werther's new album coming soon!

**… And your lowest low?**
Possibly the beginning of the pandemic and the uncertainty that went along with the whole situation. When the world shut down we had just released *Under The Sun*, the second album by Afrodyssey Orchestra, a contemporary afro-jazz band from Greece. Bad timing… we had to cancel two tours and every single gig planned to promote it. A big blow for band and label.

**What album, from any period, do you wish you could have released – and why?**
Ray Barretto's *Acid* (Fania, 1968), 'cause it brings so much together and you can really hear that something's boiling there. You can tell they were having a blast while recording it.

**Who would be your dream reissue?**
A crazy deluxe Jorge Ben box set covering all his albums until 1979, with a photo booklet, an interview with the man himself, and detailed liner notes for each album. The world needs it and dreaming doesn't cost anything!

**How do you plan what to reissue?**
Sometimes I've had a project in the back of my mind for several years before I can finally make it happen. Sometimes it just happens; Altercat's first release happened after I saw Afrodyssey Orchestra playing live in Berlin. They were incredible, so I just asked them if they had an album already. A few months later we were releasing it! Other projects become evident as they come along, such as our reissue series of Argentinian jazz giant Jorge López Ruiz. We started with his 1976 Viejas Raíces project, but the rest of his output is so good yet unknown to the greater public that it would be a crime to leave it collecting dust. He needs to be heard!

**Where would a newcomer start with your label?**
In no particular order: Werther's album, Viejas Raíces *De las colonias del rio de la plata*, Afrodyssey Orchestra's *Under The Sun, Naná – Nelson Angelo – Novelli* and Baligh Hamdi & Magid Khan's *Indo-Arabic Variations*. I think that is a colourful starter pack that would be fun to listen to. Add Costa Blanca's *Viaje a Prantia* for a little touch of twisted obscurity.

**And what can long-time fans look forward to?**
Egyptian delights by Baligh Hamdi, insane Greek 70s psychedelic rock and dancy Argentinean funk. Oh, without forgetting the usual dose of Brazilian vibes, of course!

**www.alter.cat**

### ALTERCAT RECORDS HIGHLIGHTS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9/19 | ALT 007 | WERTHER | *Werther* (LP, 8pp booklet; CD) |
| 12/19 | ALT 010 | AFROYDYSSEY ORCHESTRA | *Under The Sun* (LP, ltd splatter LP) |
| 4/22 | ALT 015 | MARIA DE FÁTIMA | *Bahia Com 'H'* (LP, 12pp booklet; ltd purple LP) |
| 5/22 | ALT 016 | BALIGH HAMDI & MAGID KHAN | *Indo-Arabic Variations* (LP, ltd red LP) |
| 6/22 | ALT 017 | LUIS VECCHIO | *Contactos* (LP, ltd red/black LP; CD) |
| 11/22 | ALT 019 | JORGE LÓPEZ RUIZ | *Bronca Buenos Aires* (LP, insert; ltd yellow LP) |
| 5/23 | ALT 024 | NANÁ VASCONCELOS | *Africadeus* (LP, ltd red LP) |
| 5/24 | ALT 027 | JORGE LÓPEZ RUIZ | *Coraje Buenos Aires* (LP, ltd orange LP) |

Photo of Sergi Roig: Murilo Sá

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# MOST Wanted

**Many of this month's top collectables, as Paul Rigby discovers, really do grow on trees**

**Now includes Whole Love Of Lots**

**BLACK SABBATH/AC/DC Poster £245**

Towards the end of the *Technical Ecstasy Tour* in April 1977, a little-known combo named AC/DC stepped up as support for Black Sabbath. **Supplied by MEM**

**THE BEATLES Figurines $1,536**

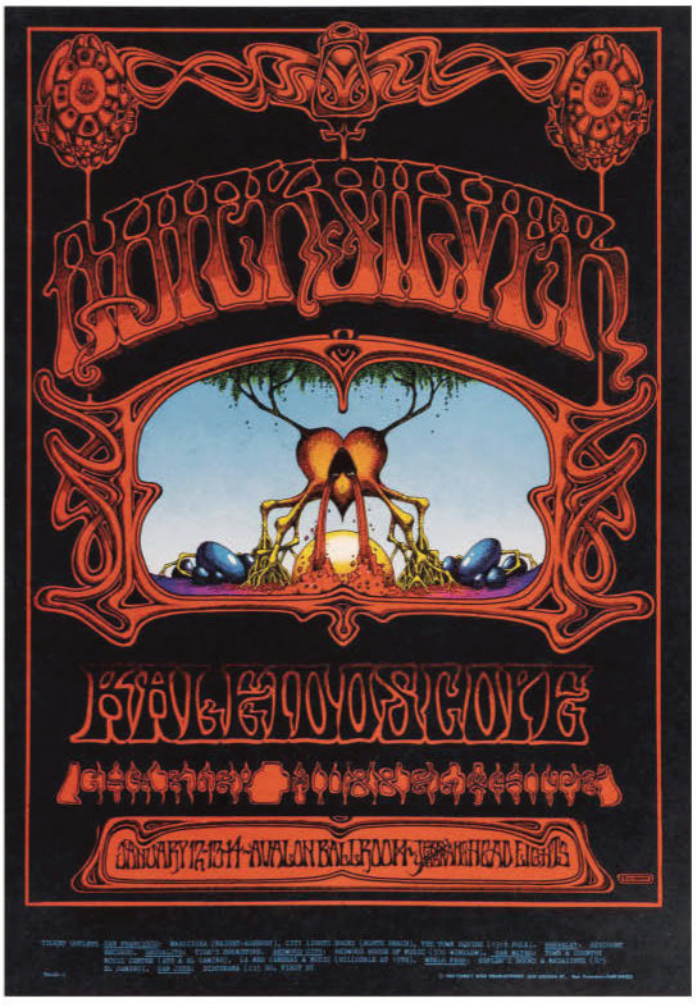
Complete set of four *Yellow Submarine* porcelain figurines via Goebel, from 1968 and created for the American market to promote the release of the movie. **Supplied by Bonhams**

**LED ZEPPELIN Advertising Display $6,347**

Double-sided, die-cut cardboard Atlantic record display, used as either a bin topper or a hanging display in record stores to promote *Led Zeppelin III*, released 5 October 1970. **Supplied by Hake's Auctions**

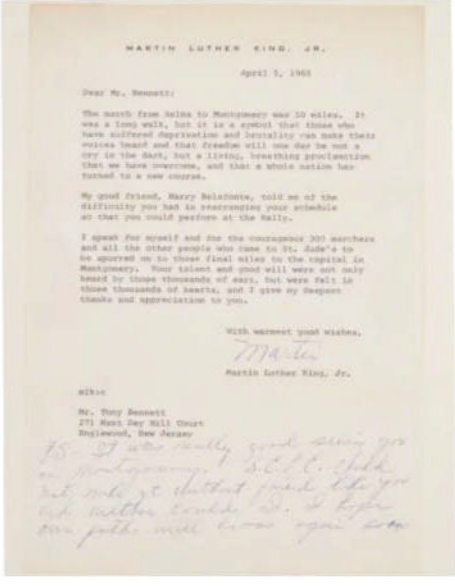
**QUICKSILVER MESSENGER SERVICE Poster $1,534**

Promoting concerts by Chet Helms' Family Dog in San Francisco at Avalon Ballroom the weekend of 12-14 January 1968. Art by Rick Griffin. **Supplied by Hake's Auctions**



**DOLLY PARTON Costume**
**$32,000**
**A** 70s stage costume used for the 1978 Monument album sleeve, *In the Beginning*. Parton also wore the custom-made ensemble in 1974 while performing at WBAP's Country Gold in Arlington, Texas. **Supplied by Julien's Auctions**

**TONY BENNETT Letter**
**$78,000**
A typed letter from Martin Luther King Jr, signed with an autographed postscript on MLK's personal stationery, dated 5 April 5 1965. Written 11 days after King led thousands of nonviolent demonstrators to the steps of the capitol in Montgomery, Alabama after a 54-mile march from Selma, Alabama that took five days. Bennett, along with Harry Belafonte and Lena Horne, entertained the crowds who camped in the yards of supporters during their historic journey. **Supplied by Julien's Auctions**

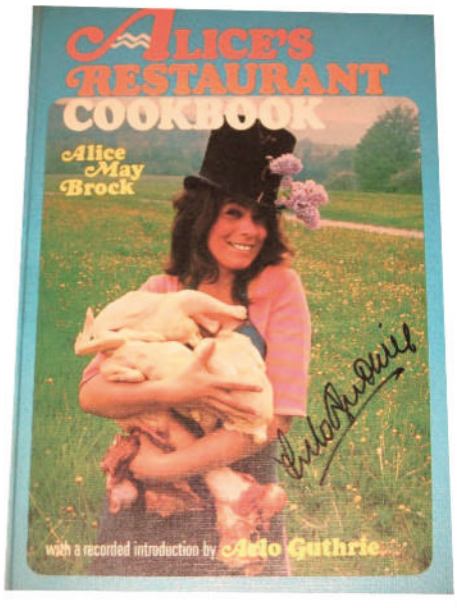


**BILL WYMAN Guitar $26,000**
A 1977 Travis Bean TB2000 short-scale bass, custom-built for Bill Wyman in 1977. Wyman used this bass for Rolling Stones recordings in 1977 and 1978. **Supplied by Julien's Auction**

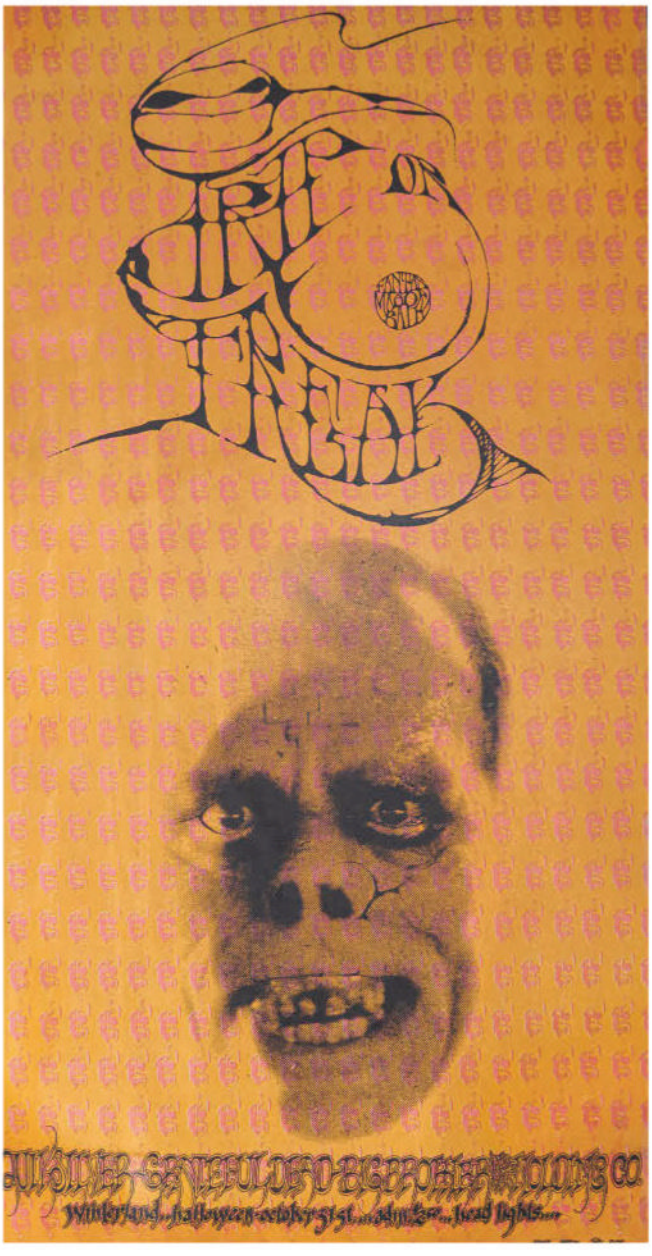
**QUEEN Poster $256**
For the Belgium Forest National Concert, in April 1978. In a *Spinal Tap* moment, during the concert, a large, overhead crown stage prop tipped to the right and threatened to fall on the band. They then played We Will Rock You at a rapidly increasing speed, then ran off to escape a possible crushing. Queen did return for an extended concert later on, though when the prop was secured. **Supplied by Bonhams**

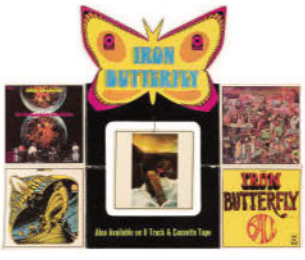
**IGGY POP Doll**
**$520-$676**
Signed by the man himself, this limited-edition NECA figure was launched in 2011. **Supplied by Mynt Auctions**

**ARLO GUTHRIE**
**Autograph £700**
First-edition of *Alice's Restaurant Cookbook* from 1969, featuring recipes and "hippie wisdom" from the real-life Alice, Alice Brock. Guthrie added an introduction to the book and has signed this copy. **Supplied by Jasper 52**



**GRATEFUL DEAD/BIG BROTHER/QUICKSILVER MESSENGER SERVICE**
**Poster $2,176**
From 1967, designed by Rick Griffin, Alton Kelley and Stanley Mouse for the Winterland Auditorium, San Francisco. **Supplied by Bonhams**




**IRON BUTTERFLY Hanging Display $1,109**
Die-cut, double-sided display opening at the centre which features a suspended replica of Iron Butterfly's fourth studio album, *Metamorphosis*, released 13 August 1970 on the Atco label. **Supplied by Hake's Auctions**

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*Send your Most Wanted suggestions to paulrigby@theaudiophileman.com*

# WHOLE LOVE OF LOTS

## This month's big scorers online

**DAVIE JONES WITH THE KING BEES**
**Liza Jane (Vocalion V9221) £5,700**
Early David Bowie outing on 7" with Louie, Louie Go Home on the flip. (eBay item number:386915850274)
**Supplied by eBay**

**CHURCHILL'S *Churchill's* (Hed Arzi BAN 14106) £4,825**
Pressed in Israel in 1987. Songs from the soundtrack of *A Woman's Case*. (eBay item number: 115903476700)
**Supplied by eBay**

**DARKTHRONE *Transilvanian Hunger* (PEACEVILLE VILE 43) £3,439**
Includes the soon-to-be removed phrase, "Norsk Arisk Black Metal" (i.e. "Norwegian Aryan Black Metal"), on the rear of the sleeve. (eBay item number: 155944220050)
**Supplied by eBay**

**DEPECHE MODE *Recording the Angel* (Live Here Now Various) £2,235**
A set of 41 CDs featuring full concerts recorded live during the 2006 *Touring The Angel* shows. (eBay item number: 255491839679) **Supplied by eBay**

**THE VELVET UNDERGROUND & NICO All Tomorrow's Parties (Verve VK 10427) $30,000**
A 7" promo, mono pressed with I'll Be Your Mirror on the flip. Released in 1966, the sleeve was only created for promotional use. Ten are believed to exist. **Supplied by Discogs**

**THE ELECTRONIC HOLE *The Beat Of The Earth* (Radish A.S. 0002) $4,076**
Released in 1970, this psychedelic rock outing was released in the USA as a mono pressing.
**Supplied by Discogs**

**METALLICA *Kill 'Em All* (Megaforce MRI 069) $2,125**
Released in the US in 1983, this is a signed copy. **Supplied by Popsike**

**JOHN JENKINS *With Kenny Burrell* (Blue Note BLP 1573) $2,524**
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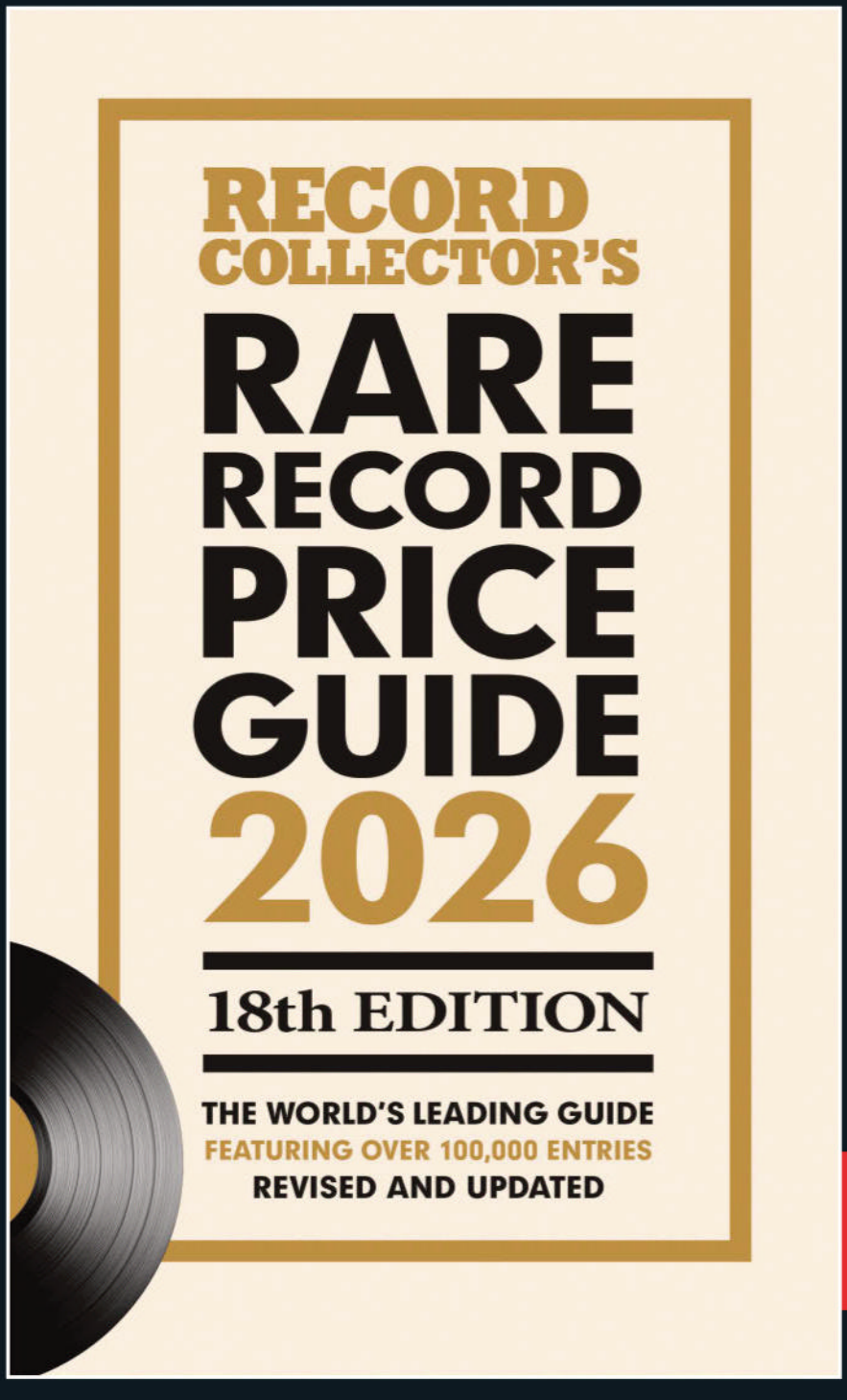


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**SCAN ME**

# Not Forgotten

## Steve Albini

### 1948-2024

Steve Albini was a man of many facets: new school punk, contrarian, prizewinning poker player, producer, and, in later life, a strong, ethical presence who sought to redeem some of the worst excesses of his earlier, appallingly contrarian years.

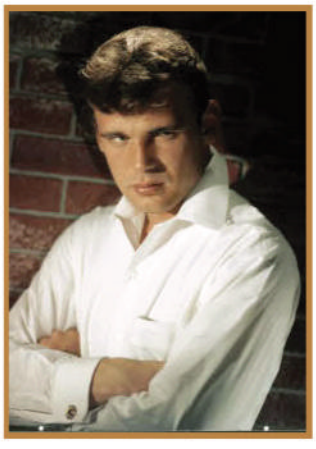
With his first band, Big Black, formed in 1986, the Chicagoan would tear rock a new asshole, culminating in 1987's *Songs About Fucking*, one of a wave of Anglo-American groups – including The Jesus & Mary Chain, AR Kane, Butthole Surfers and Sonic Youth – leading a resurgence of rock in the 80s.

However, there was a darker side to Albini, a flip, non-PC amorality that was bound up with the pumped-up gasoline energy of Big Black's sound and saw him name his follow-up project Rapeman. Unforgivably for some, he also promoted a friend's child pornography magazine, *Pure*, in *Forced Exposure* in 1987. Albini would express sorrow for his "shitty, edgelord behaviour" and acknowledge the very real role he had in the "subjugation and abuse of minorities of all kinds".

Stacked up against that was his role as a producer – for PJ Harvey and The Pixies, in which he enabled them to achieve a sound truest to themselves – and his principled refusal to accept a percentage for producing Nirvana's *In Utero*. This was punk at its truest for Albini, a practical, anti-capitalist gesture in the music industry. He was also a zealous advocate for trans rights, Extinction Rebellion, and other causes likely to put him on the right side of history.

*David Stubbs*

**David Sanborn,** died 12 May, age 78. The American jazz saxophonist played on David Bowie's *Young Americans* and collaborated with The Rolling Stones, Stevie Wonder and many others. Starting his career as a sideman working in St. Louis blues and jazz clubs, he joined The Butterfield Blues Band in 1967, appearing at the *Woodstock* festival with them. In the early 70s, he began picking up session work, touring with Wonder and playing on the musician's *Talking Book* album before making key contributions to Bowie's *Young Americans* LP. Frequently crossing genres during the decade he also recorded with B.B. King, Paul Simon, Cat Stevens, Bruce Springsteen, Elton John, Chaka Khan, Todd Rundgren and George Benson and toured with the Stones and Wonder. *Taking Off* (1975) was the first of 25 albums he released in a solo career that saw its greatest commercial success in the 80s, his brand of slick, groove-based fusion jazz sending albums like *Voyeur* (1981) to the top of the jazz charts while earning his music the tag 'smooth jazz' (a label he rejected). Continuing his session work that decade he also featured on Aretha Franklin's *Aretha* (1980) and The Rolling Stones' *Undercover* (1983). Alongside further solo albums he also contributed film scores to three *Lethal Weapon* films.



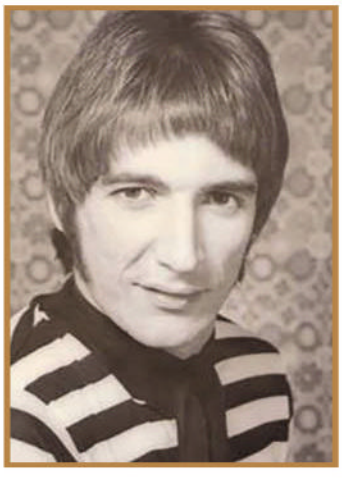
**Duane Eddy,** died 30 April, age 86. The pioneering US rock'n'roll guitarist was known as the King of Twang. His run of instrumental hits in the late 50s and early 60s featured his signature echoey 'twang' sound, which went on to inspire everyone from guitarists like George Harrison, John Fogerty and Hank Marvin to composers like Ennio Morricone. Selling more than 100 million records across his seven-decade career he notched up 21 singles in the UK Top 40, including a 1986 remake of Peter Gunn with Art of Noise which won him a Grammy award for best rock instrumental. Returning to the UK in 2010 for a sold-out show at London's Royal Festival Hall, its success prompted a new album, *Road Trip*, which was produced by Richard Hawley. ***See overleaf for an exclusive Duane Eddy interview***.

**Frank Ifield,** died 18 May, age 86. The singer topped the UK charts four times. Born in Coventry he was raised in Australia, where he cut a number of singles in the 50s. Moving to Britain in November 1959 he broke through in 1962 with I Remember You, a cover of the Victor Schertzinger/Johnny Mercer original which showcased Ifield's distinctive sung/yodelled vocals. Going on to sell over a million copies, the song spent seven weeks atop the charts and reached No 5 in the US. That feat was replicated by the singles Lovesick Blues (1962) and Wayward Wind (1963) and he followed in the footsteps of Elvis Presley as the second artist to score three consecutive No 1 singles in the UK. More successful singles followed including another No 1 – Confessin' (That I Love You) – before the hits began to dry up in the mid-60s.

**Dennis Thompson,** died 9 May, age 75. The US musician was best known as the drummer for MC5 and was the last surviving member of the garage rock band's classic line-up. Known as "Machine Gun" due to his rapid-fire approach to drumming which resembled the sound of his namesake, a Thompson machine gun (or Tommy gun), he joined the group in 1965, two years after their formation. Alongside guitarists Wayne Kramer and Fred "Sonic" Smith, singer Rob Tyner and bassist Michael Davis, he was part of the line-up that made its name as an incendiary live act in Detroit, playing gigs at left-wing rallies in the city. Following their classic live debut album, *Kick Out the Jams* (1969), the group released two more studio albums – 1970's *Back in the USA* and 1971's *High Time* – their music and attitude paving the way for punk. After the group disbanded in the early 70s Thompson played in bands such as the New Order, the Motor City Bad Boys, and the New Race and he rejoined MC5 for a number of tours from the 90s onwards.

*Photos: (Steve Albini, Gary Floyd, John Barbata, Robin George, Casey Benjamin) Facebook; (Duane Eddy) Bear Family; (Frank Ifield) Pete Chambers; (Richard Tandy) Steve Goudie*

**Richard Tandy,** died 1 May, age 76. The keyboardist was a longtime member of Electric Light Orchestra. Born in Birmingham he met future ELO bandmate Bev Bevan at school, who enlisted him to play harpsichord on The Move's 1968 UK chart-topping single Blackberry Way. In 1972 he joined the Electric Light Orchestra following the release of their debut album, serving initially as a bassist before switching to keyboards. Alongside Bevan and Jeff Lynne, he was a core member of the group until their disbandment in 1986. Employing a range of keyboards such as Minimoog synthesiser, a Wurlitzer electric piano, the clavinet, Mellotron and piano he played a crucial role in forging ELO's sound, featuring on each of their albums thereafter as well as on hits like Mr. Blue Sky and the chart-topping Xanadu. A key collaborator and close confidante of group leader Jeff Lynne, the pair worked on several projects outside of ELO, including the soundtrack for 1984's *Electric Dreams*. He was the only other previous member to rejoin Lynne for 2001 ELO album *Zoom* and in 2014 was part of the reformed group Jeff Lynne's ELO.



**John Barbata,** died 21 April, age 79. The US drummer played with The Turtles, CSNY and Jefferson Airplane. He made his name in the early 60s with surf-rock band The Sentinals. Joining The Turtles in 1967, he played on their US chart-topping single Happy Together and its UK Top 5 follow-up, She'd Rather Be With Me. In 1970 he joined Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young for a series of tour dates documented on the live album, *4 Way Street*. During that group's hiatus he played on several of its co-leader's solo albums such as Neil Young's *Time Fades Away* and Graham Nash's *Songs for Beginners*. Asked by David Crosby to join the final incarnation of Jefferson Airplane he played on 1972's *Long John Silver* album before joining spin-off group Jefferson Starship. As part of an ever-changing line up, he played on four of the group's LPs: 1974's *Dragon Fly*, 1975's *Red Octopus* 1976's *Spitfire*, and 1978's *Earth*.

**Gary Floyd,** died 21 April, date unknown. The US singer was frontman for legendary Texan punk band the Dicks. Formed in 1980, the group channelled their left-wing political leanings into songs like Anti-Klan, No Nazi's Friend, No Fuckin' War, and the classic punk anthem Dicks Hate The Police. Openly queer, Floyd would often perform in drag, his riotous stage presence influencing the likes of Dead Kennedys and Butthole Surfers. After the Dicks disbanded in 1986, Floyd performed in other bands including Sister Double Happiness, Black Kali Ma and the Buddha Brothers.

**Chan Romero,** died 21 April, age 82. The American rock'n'roll singer was best-known for the song Hippy Hippy Shake. Released in 1959 the single proved a hit in Australia and made waves in the UK. Among the many British bands to play the song live were The Beatles, whose version can be found on their album, *Live At The BBC*. A 1963 cover by The Swinging Blue Jeans reached No 2 in the UK.

**Robin George,** died 26 April, age 68. The rock guitarist, singer, songwriter and producer was best-known for his 1985 single Heartline, also working with Robert Plant and Phil Lynott. Born in Wolverhampton, he released his first EP, *History*, in 1983. The following year's debut solo album, *Dangerous Music,* featured

Thin Lizzy's Phil Lynott and included the single, Heartline, a hit on both sides of the Atlantic. Outside of a solo career which saw him release five more LPs, he also produced albums and singles by Quartz, Wrathchild, Witchfinder General, and Diamond Head, and wrote with Robert Plant and Glenn Hughes.

**Andrei Tropillo,** died 28 April, age 73. The Russian record producer and music publisher founded the influential Soviet record label, AnTrop. As head of a Leningrad-based sound studio in the 70s and 80s he unofficially produced a number of significant Soviet underground rock albums, ensuring their later legendary status. In the 90s, taking advantage of the gaps in Soviet legislation, he turned his own AnTrop label into one of the world's greatest music pirates, filling the USSR's musical vacuum with LPs by the likes of The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Deep Purple, Phil Collins, Led Zeppelin, and Bob Dylan. *Kirill Razumov*

**Casey Benjamin,** died 30 March, age 46. The American saxophonist and keyboard player was an original member of jazz/R&B collective Robert Glasper Experiment. First working with pianist Glasper in the 90s, he hooked up with him again as part of The Experiment for 2012's *Black Radio,* which reached No 15 on the US chart and won Best R&B Album at the Grammys the following year. Follow-up effort *Black Radio 2* (2013) achieved similar levels of success. A prolific collaborator known for his ability to meld genres, he also worked with Beyoncé, Solange, Kendrick Lamar and A Tribe Called Quest.

**C. J. Snare,** died 5 April, age 64. The US singer was the frontman for glam metal / hard rock band, FireHouse. A co-founding member in 1987, he would remain with them for nearly four decades, co-writing the early 90s US Top 20 hits Don't Treat Me Bad, Love Of A Lifetime and When I Look Into Your Eyes. 1990's self-titled debut album – a double-platinum seller – was the first of seven LPs he would record with the band.

**Calvin Keys,** died 14 April, age 82. The US jazz guitarist was best-known for the albums he released for cult label Black Jazz. Those albums, *Shawn-Neeq* (1971) and *Proceed with Caution!* (1974), were the first of over a dozen he released as a leader. As sideman he played with such legendary figures as Ray Charles, Ahmad Jamal, Jimmy Smith, Sonny Stitt and Pharoah Sanders.

**Others who passed away recently include: Gavin Webb**, founding bass player for Australian rock band The Masters Apprentices; **Maurice el Médioni**, Algerian pianist, composer and interpreter of Andalusian, Raï, Sephardic and Arabic music; **Reita**, bassist for Japanese Visual Kei rock band The Gazette; **Jon Card**, German-born drummer who played in the Canadian punk rock bands D.O.A., Personality Crisis, SNFU, and the Subhumans; **Louis Gossett Jr**, American actor, best-known for films such as *An Officer And A Gentleman* who was also active on the Greenwich Village folk scene. His releases included the singles Hooka Dooka, Green Green, See See Rider, and Where Have All The Flowers Gone; **Mandisa**, American gospel and Christian music singer who competed on *American Idol*; **Thongsai Thapthanon**, renowned Thai *phin* (lute) player and Isan music pioneer; **Leeson O'Keefe,** Irish musician who played for Shane MacGowan & The Popes and who fronted the London-Irish band Neck; **MC Conrad**, UK drum'n'bass vocalist best known for his partnership with producer LTJ Bukem; **Frank Wakefield**, American bluegrass mandolin player who collaborated with Red Allen, Jimmy Martin, Don Reno, and Jerry Garcia; **Steve Kille**, bassist for American stoner rock band Dead Meadow; **MC Duke**, UK hardcore rap pioneer who went on to produce breakbeat hardcore music**; Jorge 'Clorofila' Verdín**, former member of Tijuana, Mexico-based techno group Nortec Collective.

*All obituaries by Paul Bowler unless otherwise stated. With thanks to Spencer Leigh and Pete Chambers.*

*"The sound of the James Bond Theme came about because I was listening to an album by Duane Eddy called* The 'Twangs' The 'Thang' *and the sound and feel of those low notes was exactly what I was looking for. It was very influential"*
– **John Barry, interviewed by Mark Mawston in August 2007**.

**Twang gang: Eddy (second left) in 2011 at London's 100 Club with sleeve designer Peter Blake (far left) and Richard Hawley (far right)**

Duane Eddy's influence on music cannot be overestimated. His 1959 debut album, *Have 'Twangy' Guitar Will Travel,* was the *Thriller* of its day, producing five hit singles and staying on the *Billboard* charts for a massive 82 weeks. Yet he once confirmed to me that success nearly didn't come at all. "I'd had a couple of misses," he recalled, "and when we released what I thought would be my last single, Stalkin' [1958], the reception wasn't too good. It wasn't till the B-side, Rebel Rouser, was flipped and played by mistake that anyone really took any notice. It went on to sell over three million copies."

With that one flip of a disc Eddy became a huge international star, appearing in movies and releasing hits such as Peter Gunn, Because They're Young and Shazam! – he was probably only challenged by The Shadows in the superstar rock'n'roll instrumentalist stakes in the UK.

The strength of these Eddy singles helped secure him the No 1 musical personality award in 1960 as voted for by readers of *NME*, dethroning the official "King", Elvis Presley, unheard of for an instrumentalist.

Hits thereafter were sporadic, but in 1986 his re-recording of Peter Gunn with Art Of Noise became a worldwide smash, this Grammy-winning hit making Eddy the only instrumentalist to have a Top 10 record in four different decades in the UK. His music was used in 1994 Oliver Stone film *Natural Born Killers*.

As Eddy was a hero of mine, it was a huge thrill when a shot I'd taken was used for his final album release, *Road Trip* (2011), his first for 24 years. He once declared that he hated posing for photos. I decided that if I ever had the opportunity to photograph him in concert, I would aim to highlight his name on his custom-made Gretch guitar with him as a silhouette. One night, the Stetson-hatted Eddy stepped to the front of the stage, the light behind him as the dry ice was rising. I got the shot I'd hoped for.

The Richard Hawley co-produced album was released to great reviews, and I was lucky enough to cover Eddy's gigs supporting its release across London. Duane was a hero of mine, whom I'm proud to say became a friend.

He was also a reluctant interviewee, but he did agree to a chat with me, which turned out to be one of his last ever, following his sold-out show at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London on 20 May 2012.

**Were you upset when you heard the intro to The Beach Boys' Surfin' USA? They'd lifted your opening guitar licks from your Movin' & Groovin'!**
Well, some say I'm responsible for surf music, which I'm sorry for but there's nothing I can do about it [laughs]! Just kidding. No, I was very pleased with the result and don't hold anything against them as they did it so well. It's not just me. They were influenced by The Four Freshmen and many others so I can't take all the credit.

**The reception you had tonight at the QEH was amazing, but you referred to this perhaps being your last tour?**
Not if I had my way, but time moves on and whatever happens, I've loved my time here with Richard's [Hawley's] band. They're incredible. The audience has always been fantastic here in Great Britain. I'm very flattered and honoured.

## "ELVIS SAID, 'DUANE EDDY, YOU'RE THE MAN'"

**I'd read recently that you'd hung around with Elvis?**
Yes, a friend of mine and I wanted to see his show in Vegas, but we couldn't get in. My friend said not to worry as he could get us in to see Elvis after the show, which he did. We went in and Elvis asked if we'd seen the show. We said we hadn't because we couldn't get in. He looked at us and said, "If you want to see ANY show, just tell me. I have some influence round here!" [laughs] He then asked Priscilla [Elvis' wife] to take us upstairs to the after-party while he got changed. All the guys were there, most of whom we knew, and we sat around helping ourselves to food while we waited for Elvis. When he came in he came over and did this thing where he swung his arms in a sort of guitar strum and said, "Duane Eddy, you're the MAN", swinging his arm down to emphasise the last part! He treated me like a peer. And he had impeccable manners.

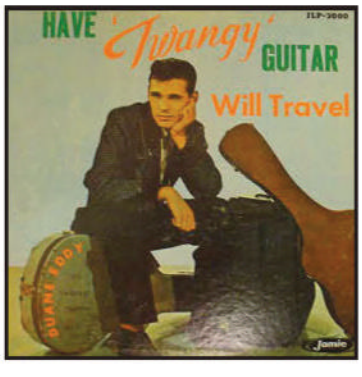
**A lot of people said that about him.**
Yes, he was very polite, saying Sir to address people, even though he was the biggest thing on the planet. He never lost sight of his Southern roots. We talked for a long time. He then disappeared and came back with his collection of badges to show me. He was very proud of them. He'd visited the President [Nixon] and used his influence to get a DA Sheriff's badge! He also had a list of contacts in various cities given to him by the DEA [Drug Enforcement Administration] so he could report on any people who were offering him drugs. Cocaine, huge bags of it, could be available at any time and in any city and he had the ways to report it. He was a great guy.

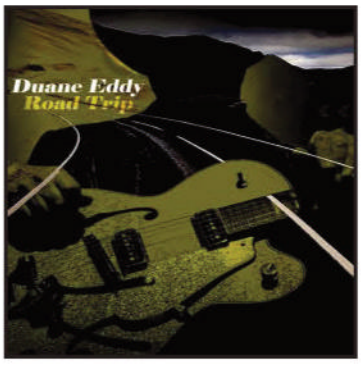
**He seemed to be a music fan, just like everyone else...**
Yes, he'd have records with him all the time, old and new, and liked to keep up on things. He never stopped being a fan.

**The album *Duane Eddy* (1987) was one of my favourites. Were you disappointed it didn't do better?**
I was but it was No 1 for three weeks on the Country Charts. After Peter Gunn [the hit single with Art Of Noise] we were hoping for more, especially with all the talent involved [Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Ry Cooder et al]. It did well enough here [the UK], though, so I can't complain.

**You said that this may be the last time you tour here and thanked everyone for their support. If the opportunity came, would you come back?**
At the drop of a hat.

***(Pointing at Eddy's Stetson)* And that's a big hat!**
Sure is!



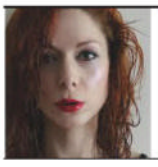

***Mark Mawston is a photographer for* Record Collector, *Jill Furmanovsky's* Rock Archive *and London's Southbank, specifically its annual* Meltdown Festival. *Mark wishes to thank Duane Eddy, Graham Wretch and Duane's wife, Deed.***

# Duane Eddy

## 1938-2024

By *Record Collector* photographer Mark Mawston

# anchoressaway



## Catherine Anne Davies on the ethics of vinyl production

The environmental ethics of vinyl manufacturing in the midst of a climate crisis are something of a hot topic right now (if you'll excuse the pun…).

Global megastars such as Billie Eilish and Taylor Swift are seemingly trading verbal punches over just who, what, and how much each are doing to counter the huge carbon footprints involved in touring, manufacturing and the general shenanigans of being a pop star in the 21st century.

And vinyl has been *the* watchword on everyone's lips. Not least because, while revenues are falling everywhere for your average band/artist, the demand for vinyl has, conversely, seen a huge explosion. Despite the fact that streaming still made up 4/5ths of the total consumption of music in 2023, according to the Official Charts, around 5.9 million vinyl records were sold in the UK – a whopping 11.7 per cent rise on the previous year. This makes it a lucrative market for musicians in a landscape otherwise dominated by the measly spoils of Spotify, where a single stream will net you a paltry £0.04 (and that's before the record company has taken its cut…).

Upping the vinyl sales ante in 2024 we've already had Swift's recent offering, *The Tortured Poets Department*, accumulating first week vinyl sales in excess of 800,000, with the album available in four different vinyl variants.

Eilish seemed to be taking aim at Swift and her ilk with her recent comments in a *Billboard* interview [*see our news pages,* RC *558 – Ed*] that blasted "some of the biggest artists in the world making fucking 40 different vinyl packages… just to get you to keep buying more. It's so wasteful".

Wasteful *and* highly toxic: the PVC used to make vinyl takes up to a thousand years to degrade, and Greenpeace has called it "the single most environmentally damaging of all plastics".

So, what's an artist to do? While Swift's team have asserted her green credentials in that she bought "double the amount of carbon offsets needed" for the recent *Eras* tour, this seems like the *bare minimum* for an artist of her wealth and status. Others such as Coldplay and Paramore have made sustainability "mandatory" on their own tours, using a range of approaches from installing composting bins on site to minimising single-use plastics.

While critics might counter that there were *also* four vinyl variants of Eilish's 2021 album, *Happier Than Ever,* it's worth noting that the album appeared on 100 per cent *recycled* black vinyl, as well as utilising shrink-wrap made from sugar cane. Eilish upped the ante in 2022 by turning the entire O2 arena vegan for six days, and now she's including a £1 donation to the music sustainability nonprofit Reverb from all ticket sales on her upcoming tour. Eilish has indeed been practising what she preaches for years.

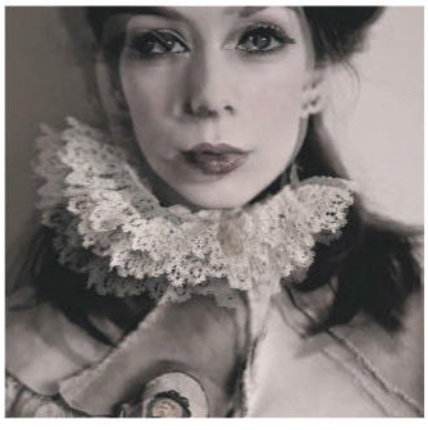
**We can put pressure on labels to only use reycled or bio vinyl**

But what of the conundrum for artists like me on a more modest budget? The debate around the real "costs" of vinyl has arrived just at the moment when The Musicians' Census revealed that nearly half of professional musicians earn just under £14,000 a year. While Swift might be raking in $1 billion of tour revenue, a recent *Guardian* report showed that the majority of signed bands and artists are still failing to make a profit from touring. So, to be frank, flogging the vinyl of your latest release at the merch stall afterwards *really* helps.

But how do we go about doing it with a clean(er) conscience?

For my most recent album, *Versions*, we chose to prioritise making eco-conscious choices when it came to pressing up the record in a way that not only didn't compromise on audio quality but also, by happenstance, ended up embodying the entire concept of the project itself.

As a collection of reworkings of classic indie/alternative anthems from the last three decades, we stumbled upon the option to press on "eco-vinyl" (which reuses the leftover coloured pellets of vinyl from the factory floor). As well as being far more environmentally friendly than using standard "virgin" PVC vinyl, the end product resulted in each record pressed being a completely unique colour combination and collector's item – a win for both the fan *and* for the planet. I love the idea that, like the collection of songs being pieces of other people's imaginations, this record is quite literally made up of unused parts of other records.



I was able to press the album with a sense of doing "the right thing" by our burning planet while offering up something truly collectable, that also satisfies my sense that a physical album product should always feel like something more than a storage unit for sound. All of this was done without any extra cost for fans or an increase in unit price for the label.

So, as we face down the stark realities of the climate crisis, we should all be turning towards these innovative manufacturing methods. You, the collector, the listener, can also exert your own kind of influence. While none of us may be as powerful or as rich as Taylor Swift, we *can* vote with our cash and put pressure on labels to *only* use recycled or bio vinyl and the more eco-friendly alternatives to single-use plastic shrink wrap.

As Eilish herself has put it so eloquently, "It's about all of us being part of the problem and trying to do better."

***Catherine Anne Davies makes records as The Anchoress. theanchoress.co.uk.***

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# TALKING HEADS

**On the couch with *RC*'s resident shrink, Dr Tim**

## PAUL MOLLOY

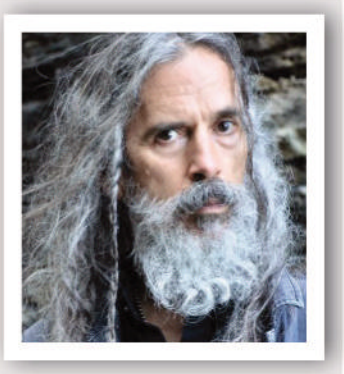
**The Coral** guitarist on his latest solo endeavour

***What film could your new set soundtrack?***
It's a musical satire about the apocalypse, so *Dr Strangelove*, or a dystopian *Bugsy Malone*.
***If you could revisit any album, what'd you change?***
It'd be interesting to re-record *Serpent Power* a bit rawer, live, and bluesier.
***Is there anything still unissued?***
Tons of 8-tracks, cassettes and DATs of my first group, and projects.
***Have you done anything that fans may not know about?***
A load of jingles for *Holy Joe*. None got used.
***With whom would you like to make a split 7"?***
Tom Waits or CW Stoneking.
***What was your favourite record shop when you started out?***
Hairy Records, Bold Street, Liverpool. My friend Carl worked there, and it was a great music hub.
***What was your first record?***
A Chuck Berry best-of, age nine.
***What's the last album that you bought?***
Dan Hicks & His Hot Licks' latest.
***What record made you want to go pro?***
The Beatles *Anthology*, age 15.
***Was anyone in your family a musician?***
My uncle Joey was a singer/songwriter, cut a few singles in the 70s/80s, and was in skiffle band, The Rockets.
***What's the oddest circumstance that inspired a song?***
My girlfriend and I were listening to Harry Belafonte and old calypso, and she suggested that I wrote a calypso tune. I was already writing for *The Madmen Of Apocalypso* album, but I was about to go to bed and the song title and melody came to me.
***Which of your songs is most personally meaningful?***
Absent Friends.
***Do you have a go-to 'comfort album'?***
I have 'Billie Holiday baths' LPs.

***Paul Molloy* The Madmen Of Apocalypso *LP is on Spring Heeled, 6 September.***

## CHRISTOPHER JAMES CHAPLIN

Avant-garde soundtracker on his most recent endeavour



***What film could your new set soundtrack?***
It's a collaborative album with Eraldo Bernocchi. A noir road movie set in a volcanic landscape.
***With whom would you like to make a split 7"?***
Max Cooper.
***What was your favourite record shop when you started out?***
Panorama, Rue Panorama, Vevey, Switzerland. Two listening booths, and run by two serious, older ladies.
***What was your first record?***
Johnny Winter *Still Alive And Well*, age 12.
***What's the last album that you bought?***
Heiner Goebbels *A House Of Call – My Imaginary Notebook*.
***What made record made you want to go pro?***
Bartok's piano concertos, with Géza Anda on piano and Ferenc Fricsay conducting the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra.
***What records most influenced you?***
Mark Hollis. He was unparalleled.
***What's the oddest circumstance that inspired a song?***
Coming across dolmens in Cornwall inspired *Patriarchs*.
***Have you ever collected anyone?***
Beat Furrer, Heiner Goebbels – sounds that I'd never heard before.
***What record are you looking for?***
Butch Morris *Homeing*.
***Which of your songs would you segue?***
Methuselah, The Feathered Girl.
***With whom would you most like to record?***
Ensemble Modern, in Frankfurt Am Main.
***Of all the people that you've worked with, who taught you the most?***
Hans-Joachim Roedelius taught me how to listen and be in the moment. He made me take the plunge with improvisation and opened me up to a whole world of electronic/ambient music.
***What's next?***
The solo *Door 1 Door 2*, in September.

***Christopher James Chaplin* The Same And The Other *is on Curious Music, 28 June.***

## NINA NESBITT

Singer-songwriter on her upcoming studio effort

***What film could your new set soundtrack?***
*The Sound Of Music*, one of my comfort movies.
***Is there anything still unissued?***
My best friend and I at 14 started a school duo, Vintage Radio. We recorded a version of Fields Of Gold on GarageBand in the school computer room and put it on YouTube. I mostly took the harmonies.
***What was your favourite record shop when you started out?***
I never had a record-player growing up and only got one a few years ago. Since then, I've really loved going to record shops and picking out random albums. Grammar School Records, Rye, East Sussex, is great. I always ask the lovely man who runs it for recommendations and he gets them perfect every time, like *Chet Baker Sings*.
***What's the last album that you bought?***
Prefab Sprout *From Langley Park To Memphis*, for my boyfriend's birthday.
***What record made you want to go pro?***
When I first heard Taylor Swift *Fearless* in my school music class, I knew that I wanted to write songs like that. It felt relatable, and I loved the simplicity of the chords and instrumentation. It leaves room for the story to unfold. I learnt the songs online, and that's how I started playing guitar and writing.
***What's the oddest place that's inspired a song?***
I feel really inspired when I'm near a swimming pool. I came up with *The Sun Will Come Up, The Seasons Will Change* and lyrics for the title track sitting next to a pool at the gym.
***What fact about you may surprise fans?***
I have a weird genetic thing where I still have a baby tooth.
***What's your go-to 'comfort album'?***
Bon Iver *For Emma, Forever Ago*. It's drenched in nostalgia and instantly calms me. I love listening to it on long drives – so relaxing and lyrically abstract.

***"WHEN I FIRST HEARD TAYLOR SWIFT I KNEW I WANTED TO WRITE SONGS LIKE THAT"***

***Do you keep a diary?***
When I'm having a bad time, in the hope that I'll read it later and think, "Well, I'm not there anymore." There's something comforting about old diary entries and realising things do work out one way or another. It can also be quite a good way to think of new lyrics, rather than my normal stream of consciousness.
***What's your favourite songwriter's best lyric?***
Joni Mitchell, A Case Of You: "Just before our love got lost you said/I am as constant as a northern star/And I said, 'Constantly in the darkness/Where's that at? If you want me, I'll be in the bar.'"
***Was there ever a life-changing* Sliding Doors *moment?***
A few, the most recent being when I opened for Coldplay at Glasgow Hampden Stadium. Chris Martin was there when I was soundchecking and heard me sing. He asked me to sing a duet that night. It was a pinch-me moment, and something that I'll remember for a long time.
***Is there something that you've never revealed before?***
Sometimes there are three or four versions of a song with completely different chords and melody. If I believe in a lyric enough, I'll keep trying to write it until the story finds the right chords. Some of my most popular songs exist in three different ways. I wonder what people would think of the earlier versions, or if I picked the right ones?
***What unfulfilled ambitions do you have?***
I'm quite shy and feel uncomfortable onstage, so I'd love to change that.
***Dying peacefully on your deathbed, what'd you like to hear?***
Sigur Rós, Hoppípolla.

***Nina Nesbitt* Mountain Music *blue LP, test-pressing LP, CD, cassette are on Apple Tree, 27 September.***

Photo: (Evergrey) Patric Ullaeus; Nina Nesbitt (Jon Stone)

## CONOR O'BRIEN

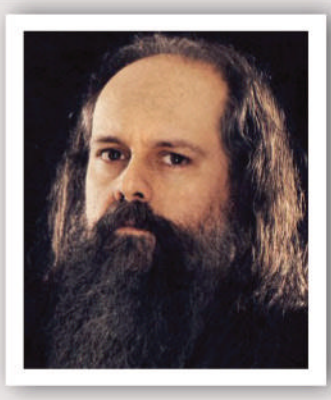
Irish indie mainstay on **Villagers**' sixth studio set

***What film could your new album soundtrack?***
A movie about culturally determined value-systems that masquerade as universal truths.
***Is there anything still unissued?***
A lot of teen audio experiments and covers on my Tascam 414 tape-recorder at school. Fun to rediscover.
***Where were you when you first heard one of your songs on vinyl?***
In 2004, Simon Williams of Fierce Panda sent us a test-pressing 7" of The Immediate's Never Seen/Say This. We huddled round the record-player with our eyes closed.
***What was your favourite record shop when you started out?***
Beat That, Arklow. My friends and I still make a biannual pilgrimage.
***What's the last album that you bought?***
Joni Mitchell *Court And Spark*.
***What record made you want to go pro?***
Radiohead *OK Computer*. Magical.
***Did you ever write songs 'under the influence'?***
I used to smoke a *lot* of weed. Most of the first two Villagers albums. And red wine at many writing sessions.
***Have you kept studio notebooks?***
I'm a hoarder. I'm releasing a book of lyrics later this year, including drawings, scribbles and early versions of songs. I love all that.
***Who's stood out musically lately?***
Kendrick Lamar, The Bonk.
***Which of your songs is the most personally meaningful?***
Truly Alone.
***Do you have a 'comfort album'?***
Air *Moon Safari*. I return to it every few months.
***If you had a record-listening party, what'd you play, and who'd you invite?***
Stevie Wonder *Innervisions*. I'd invite sworn enemies!
***Dying peacefully on your deathbed, what'd you like to hear?***
Somewhere Out There, from the film, *An American Tail*.

***Villagers* That Golden Time *is on Domino, and the* Passing A Message *book is due via Faber.***

## JOHAN NIEMANN

**Evergrey** bassist on the symphonic power-metallers' latest outing

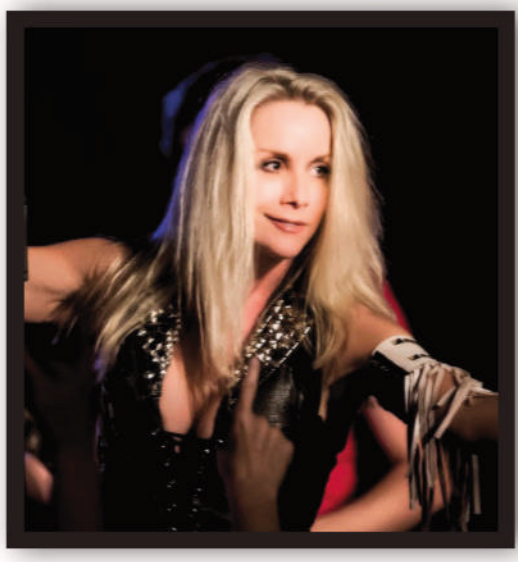


***What film could your new set soundtrack?***
*Everything Everywhere All At Once*.
***Is there anything still unissued?***
A few really early demos from when I was 15.
***With whom would you like to make a split 7"?***
Katatonia.
***Who'd you like to remix?***
Danzig *II*.
***What was your favourite record shop when you started out?***
Progress Records, Stockholm. King Crimson bootlegs.
***What was your first record?***
Rainbow *Down To Earth*.
***What's the last album that you bought?***
David Bowie *Blackstar*.
***What record made you want to go pro?***
KISS *Alive II*.
***What record most influenced you?***
Al Di Meola *Elegant Gypsy*.
***Is anyone in your family a musician?***
My brother, Kristian, is guitarist with Sorcerer, our dad played guitar, keys and accordion, our uncles played violin, and our cousin, piano.
***What'd you ask your music hero?***
Anthony Jackson, stories about working with Al Di Meola.
***Who'd you like to cover one of your songs?***
Krister Linder, The Departure.
***What backstage incident makes you laugh most?***
A guitar tech hid in a backstage refrigerator once and scared our guitarist to death!
***What fact about you may surprise fans?***
I listen to a lot of Far Eastern traditional music: Guo Gan, Guo Yue, Liu Fang.
***Which album, on first-listen, is the most startling that you ever heard?***
Olivier Messiaen *L'Ascension*.
***Do you have any 'comfort albums'?***
Frank Zappa *The Yellow Shark*, Pauline Oliveros *Deep Listening*.
***With whom would you most like to record?***
Robert Fripp, Rick Rubin.
***What tribute album would you contribute to?***
Madonna, Live To Tell.
***What's your favourite songwriter's best lyric?***
Peter Gabriel, any.

***Evergrey* Theories Of Emptiness *is on Napalm.***

## CHERIE CURRIE

**The Runaways**' guitarist/singer returns for an autumn tour before her next album



***What's your latest project?***
A 13-date UK and Ireland tour in November/December.
***If you could re-visit any of your albums, what'd you change?***
I'd have picked a different record company than Blackheart for *Blvds Of Splendor*. They shelved it for a decade. I guess Joan Jett and Kenny Laguna can't stand any competition. They showed me how savage this biz is. I'm just not that evil.
***With whom would you like to make a split 7"?***
Glenn Danzig.
***Where were you when you first heard one of your songs on vinyl?***
The living room of my family home.
***What was your favourite record shop when you started out?***
Tower Records, Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood.
***What was your first record?***
American Pie 7", age 14.
***What's the last album that you bought?***
David Bowie *David Live*.
***What record made you want to go pro?***
David Bowie *Diamond Dogs*.
***Was anyone in your family a musician?***
My father, Don Currie Sr, was a great singer.
***Have you kept studio notebooks?***
I found a few last week, when I cleaned out my garage – notes on songs from the first Runaways record.
***Who'd you like to cover one of your songs?***
Celine Dion, Believe. It inspires me still.
***Would you change any of your artwork, given the chance?***
The first Runaways sleeve. It immediately started the division in the band.
***What fact about you may surprise fans?***
I've been a professional chainsaw carver for 22 years.
***What record that you own may surprise fans?***
John Denver *Rocky Mountain High*.
***Which album, on first-listen, is the most startling that you ever heard?***
Suzi Quatro *Your Momma Won't Like Me*.
***Do you have a go-to 'comfort album'?***
Gordon Lightfoot *Greatest Hits*.
***Is there a myth about you that you'd like to set straight?***
That I was spoiled and arrogant and left the band because I thought I was better than them. I left because I was threatened by Lita Ford.
***Which question do you wish people would stop asking?***
Is there going to be a Runaways reunion? It's Joan and Lita that can't get past their differences. I hope, but it's gone now. Fuck 'em.
***To which tribute album would you contribute?***

***"THERE'S A MYTH ABOUT WHY I LEFT THE BAND. IT'S BECAUSE I WAS THREATENED BY LITA FORD"***

I just did a duet with Billy Vera, Don't Look Back. Even Robert Plant recorded it, and it will be on his tribute record.
***Of all the people that you've worked with, who taught you the most?***
Suzi Quatro.
***What unfulfilled ambitions do you have?***
To find peace in this nutty life, learn to live with loss, and forgive the unforgivable.
***If you drove an ice cream van, what'd it play?***
Cherry Bomb. I only wish that I knew back then when I wrote the melody that I deserved a credit for it!
***Dying peacefully on your deathbed, what'd you like to hear?***
Gordon Lightfoot, If You Could Read My Mind.

***See the Gig Guide on page 122.***

# 33⅓ minutes with... Dana Gillespie

**Interview: Lois Wilson**

**Dana Gillespie was the 60s It Girl who hung out with a pre-Bowie David Jones at Soho cafe La Gioconda and sang at the Marquee alongside Julie Driscoll. Jimmy Page produced her 1965 single, Thank You Boy, and played on her 1968 debut album, *Foolish Seasons*. Its follow-up, 1969's *Box Of Surprises,* paired her with producer Mike Vernon and Savoy Brown while 1973's *Weren't Born A Man* saw her working with Bowie and Mick Ronson. *First Love*, her covers album out now, is produced by Marc Almond and Tris Penna. "Marc said to me, 'I'm fed up with you being the biggest undiscovered secret on the planet,'" she says on the motivation behind what will be her 74th album. "He said we've got to change that. I've never even been asked to perform on Jools Holland's *Later*. I'm too old to be pissed off but I have been overlooked."**

Photo: Christina Jansen

**"Morrissey sent me an email saying, 'Your version is far better than mine!'"**

***First Love* is a departure from your signature blues style and sees you reinterpreting songs by Green Day, Morrissey, Jake Bugg and Lana Del Rey. How did you pick the songs for the album?**
They are not just any songs. Each one means something to me or relates to my life in some way. I picked some of the tracks, Marc picked some, Tris picked some.

**What was the vibe in the studio during the recording?**
I've produced myself since 1973 so it was marvellous to be able to say to Marc and Tris, both who I know very well and trust, I'm in your hands. We did a couple of rehearsals at the Temple Of Art And Music first and then we went to Dean Street Studios which is Marc's favourite studio. We used the musicians from my London Blues Band and it turned out wonderful.

**The first single from the album is a cover of Morrissey's Spent The Day In Bed and he's designed the cover artwork for it.**
We've never met but he sent this email saying, "Your version is far better than mine!" which was incredibly nice of him. Tris suggested I do it, he's friends with Morrissey, and I can really relate to the lyrics. I could have written this song myself because I love to spend the day in bed, especially at this time when everything is so awful. I agree with Morrissey: Stop watching the news, it frightens you and messes with your mind. Tris also suggested I cover a David Bowie song.

**You do Can You Hear Me? Why that one?**
I never would have thought of covering him at all because, aside from Mott The Hoople doing All The Young Dudes, I think he's almost un-coverable. But I'd heard Can You Hear Me? as a demo and so I took that as my starting point – not the version on *Young Americans* and Bowie didn't tend to write love songs so this felt something different. There's no point doing covers if you're not going to put your own stamp on them. It's not about making straight copies.

**You first met Bowie back in 1963 at the Marquee in London. How did that come about?**
It was at a Yardbirds or High Numbers gig. I don't remember which. He had his R&B band, The King Bees, at the time. He picked me up and asked if he could stay at mine. He taught me a few chords and we hung out at La Gioconda on Denmark Street, Tin Pan Alley. All the aspiring singers and musicians did. We'd nurse a cup of tea until a music publisher came in asking for a backing singer. Then, of course, he wrote Andy Warhol for me.

**Do you have fond memories of that era?**
I was so lucky to live through the 60s. It produced such fabulous music. Everybody had fun, it was so free. I got the best of times. It was straight after the war, the pill had been invented, everything was good.

**You actually started out as a drummer.**
I had Let There Be Drums by Sandy Nelson and that inspired me to become a drummer. And there were The Honeycombs who had Honey Lantree on drums. But I soon found singing was more fun than drumming. My drum teacher was very friendly with Buddy Rich and by the time he'd taken me to see Buddy Rich play 30 times I realised, holy shit, I can never be that good.

**How much control did you have over your early career as a female in a male-oriented music industry?**
Girl singers were judged on how you looked so when I did *Ready Steady Go!* for the first time in 1965, just before my 16th birthday, I had to deal with the producer who didn't talk to my face but looked at my tits. Guys were tossers and we just had to get on with it.

**You were also an actor, starring in Hammer's 1968 film *The Lost Continent* and Kevin Connor's *The People That Time Forgot* from 1977.**
When I wasn't singing I had to make a living. There was also *Secrets Of A Windmill Girl* [1966, directed by Arnold L Miller]. I was singing and playing guitar at a party in that, and I got £25 for writing the song in it. Then I did the [1974] *Mahler* film with Ken Russell and wrote some of the music for it.

**What was working with Ken Russell like?**
It was great but after we finished shooting it in the day he would be obsessing over *Tommy* in the evenings. He knew *Mahler* could never be a huge mega-success because of the subject matter and he had high hopes for *Tommy*.

**You were the original Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. How was that?**
I preferred singing and acting rather than just acting and it was good. But I left after a year because to sing the same thing eight times a week… it's like working in a factory. My mother was thankful, though, when I was doing *Superstar* because it was a legit piece. But I was lucky. My parents were very liberal and let me do exactly what I wanted to do and let me go on the road when I was 15.

**Were they musical?**
My father played piano by ear; my mother sang hymns driving us to school. Not that she was that religious but that's all she knew. But she did sing a rather curious song to me when I was about five: [Sings] "Cocaine Bill and Morphine Sue/Walking down the avenue two by two/Oh oh honey have a little [sniffs loudly twice] on me, have a [sniffs] on me." I asked her years later why she was singing a song about drugs to me when I was so young, and she just said that was what they had sung in the war.

**This is your 74th album. Will there ever be a time when you won't want to make music?**
I can't imagine not making music. I think I will be doing it until I die.

**First Love *is on Fretsore. See over for Marc Almond interview.***

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# "I WAS SEEN AS AN OUTSIDER"

It's 43 years since Soft Cell's cover of Gloria Jones' Tainted Love turned singer **Marc Almond** and his synth-playing partner Dave Ball into overnight stars, and 42 years since Almond kicked off a solo career that continues to this day. The nervous kid that we first saw on *Top Of The Pops* on 13 August 1981 is now one of the longest-performing artists of his generation, with his 27th solo album, *I'm Not Anyone*, about to land. Addiction and a near-fatal road accident couldn't stop him, he tells **Joel McIver**, although a nice fruit garden just might…

**This writer and Marc Almond have a few things in common, not least the fact that we're both Northerners transplanted to the South of England. But I hadn't expected us to find common ground in the fact that we both have one leg slightly shorter than the other. This allows us to complain, as people of a certain age frequently do, about our respective lifetimes of lower back pain.**

"Forty years of wearing Cuban heels hasn't helped the situation very much," sighs Almond, talking to *RC* in a hotel in London's Soho, dressed in regulation black, apologising for being late back from his acupuncturist.

With our physical ailments taken care of, we can turn our attention to Almond's fabulous new album, a covers collection called *I'm Not Anyone*. It's about identity, as you might imagine, a theme explored in depth through songs by Neil Diamond, Mahalia Jackson, Paul Anka and others. In case that sounds a bit depressing, it's anything but, with Almond inserting his trademark soaring wails and emotive narration into music ranging from upbeat rock and funked-up pop to the torch songs that built his early career.

It's the dimensions of the songwriting that hit me hardest: the album ends with an eight-minute waltz, Don McLean's Chain Lightning, on which Almond asks life's biggest questions about who we are, why we're here and where we're going. This should come as no surprise given that his old band Soft Cell made their name with songs that questioned the role of society's misfits.

There's plenty to talk about, then. Although Almond has successfully held onto his spot in the public eye for four decades, he hasn't always had an easy time of it, cleaning up from drug addiction in the late 90s and narrowly surviving a motorbike crash in 2004 that left him in a coma for a month. He's documented a lot of this in painful detail in a couple of autobiographies, but you sense that there's a lot of unresolved fragility there when he talks about life's pitfalls.

Sitting and talking with him is easy, though. My late mum, bless her, was a bit concerned when I bought Soft Cell's 1981 debut album, *Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret,* at the age of 10 and she saw that it had a song on it called Sex Dwarf. If she could see Almond today, her worries would dissipate: at 66, he's a friendly, slightly timid bloke, very easy to get on with and evidently looking forward to heading into retirement in due course.

Still, like many of us, he overthinks things.

"I'm always worried that I won't have enough time," he confides. "I can hear time passing... tick-tock."

**You were born Peter Almond in Southport in 1957. Were you a happy kid?**

I had periods of happiness and unhappiness. I have wonderful memories from the time we lived in Southport. My memories of living in Horsforth, near Leeds, when I was a teenager, are not so good, and I would say I was quite unhappy from the ages of 13 to 16, although that doesn't mean there weren't happy times within that period. On the one hand, I had fantastic grandparents and I adored them. On the other, my parents were very young, and my father was a violent alcoholic.

**How did you get on at school?**

School was very difficult for me because I've always been somewhere on the spectrum, although I'm not sure where: I can't relate to certain things, and I can't see numbers properly. I was a very small, poorly kid, and I'm not academic in the slightest – I was at schools that were above me, educationally speaking, so it was a constant struggle for survival. I'm not saying it was all bad: I mostly hung out with the girls, but I had a couple of male friends who were outsiders like I was. I got through it, somehow.

**Did you learn any musical instruments?**

No. I tried, but I can't figure out which key is where, and then I forget it two minutes later anyway. I loved singing, though, and I was in the choir at school. I once stunned my classmates when I was about 12 by suddenly standing up and singing She's Leaving Home by The Beatles when we were supposed to be writing something on the theme of leaving home. I don't know what came over me. There was a stunned silence, and after that they respected me a little. I'd been bullied before that because I wasn't academic – they'd call me "thicko" and whatever, as well as "queer boy" and "poof". Kids are lovely, aren't they?

Photo: Mark Langthorne

**Marc Almond eyes up his illustrious career: "I can hear time passing"**

**"We were shocked we had any success" (l-r): Soft Cell in 1982; cover stars, 1982-3; the Soul Inside video; with the director Tim Pope, 1983**

**Did you have a career in mind?**
Well, I only got two O-levels because I couldn't see numbers and I couldn't write that well, and when I left school, my headmaster said to me, "You might get a job with the Corporation if you're lucky" – in other words, emptying dustbins, that kind of thing. That was very encouraging! I did have an imaginative brain, though, and I read a lot, watched a lot of films and listened to a lot of music. I gave myself an education, in my own way.

**You endured some pretty grim treatment as a teenager.**
When I was about 17, I worked at Southport Theatre as a stagehand and operating the follow spotlight, and at that time you had to deal with seaside impresarios who were hands-on with the young boys all the time. You were fighting off these northern producers at the pantomimes or the variety shows. They'd pin you up against the wall and stick their tongue in your mouth. Afterwards I'd laugh about it, but at the time it was quite brutal.

**Did this damage you mentally?**
No, I don't think it did, because that's just how it was back then, and I dealt with it. Some people are very affected by these things and it stays with them, but I'd been through bullying and name-calling at school, and this was just one more thing to deal with. If you grew up in the 60s and 70s, it was just part of life. A lot of people came away damaged by it, but I didn't, thankfully.

**What do you remember of studying fine art at Leeds Polytechnic?**
I had to put up with all that stuff at art college as well. My art tutors at Leeds Poly made fun of me, in a nice way I should add, and borderline sexually assaulted me half the time. Jeff Nuttall, a wonderful art tutor that I idolised who wrote a book called *Bomb Culture*, would say, "Let's all sit on Marc and pull his trousers off," that kind of thing.

**At Leeds, you met Dave Ball and formed Soft Cell, but life was still tough.**
Yes, but my experiences at school had given me armour that helped me to deal with a lot of things. Art college gave me more of that armour, because when you do a fine art course you don't do it with a career in mind – you have to sell yourself and your art to people. I spent my grant in the first two weeks and had two jobs to support myself, one at Leeds Playhouse and one in a disco. I was living on [unpleasant 70s 'health' drink] Complan in a terrible, terrible bedsit. I was in one flat and Dave was in another: he used to give me tapes of his songs and I'd write my lyrics to them. I remember writing Say Hello, Wave Goodbye and Bedsitter that way, because they were basically stories of how I was living my life.

**Soft Cell signed to Some Bizzare in 1981 and your third single, Tainted Love, was a No 1 hit that July. How did that feel?**
I remember getting a call on the payphone in the student digs that I was living in, and I was told that Tainted Love was in the Top 20. That blew my mind, although we'd had a little bit of success before this with the Memorabilia single. I couldn't take it in because it didn't seem real to me. It rose to No 9 the following week, so they wanted to us to do *Top Of The Pops*. Nothing prepares you for that if you've watched *Top Of The Pops* all your life, as I had. We went down to London, where the record company put us in some terrible, flea-ridden hotel, and did the show.

**What were the consequences of that first *TOTP* on 13 August, 1981?**
For us, there was life before *Top Of The Pops* and life after *Top Of The Pops*. It just exploded. It was absolutely crazy. I had to move away from Leeds, because I knew a lot of people who were pleased for me and a lot of people who weren't. They'd say, "Oh, so you're rich now?" and I'd say, "No, I'm not," which was true because the record company hadn't paid us an advance and I was still living in a tiny little house.

**The B-side of Tainted Love would have made you a huge amount of money had it been a Soft Cell song, rather than a cover of The Supremes' Where Did Our Love Go.**
The reason why we did that, as we did with Bedsitter and Torch, was that we recorded the songs as 12" singles, and because Tainted Love segues into Where Did Our Love Go on the 12" version, the easiest thing to do was to split it in half for the two sides of the 7" single. We had no idea, until someone told us later, that we'd lost a lot of money by doing that.

**Did you ever work out how much that cost you?**
I can't even bear to think about it. It's too awful. That was the biggest mistake we ever made. We were very naive, and we didn't have the right people around us, or the right advice. We were sharkbait in those early days – just two art students, not hard-nosed businesspeople, who were shocked that we'd had any commercial success.

**How did you deal with sudden fame after Tainted Love?**
Nothing prepares you for pop stardom, really. I remember a newspaper journalist coming to the door of our little terraced house and asking me, "Is it true that you've told Soft Cell's number one fan to fuck off?" and I said no, but it turned out that someone had been bothering me in the street, so I'd told her to go away and she went to the press. They said, "You've insulted your number one fan!" So there was

Soft Cell – *The Art Of Falling Apart* (Some Bizzare BIZL 3, 1983) Estimated market value: **£15**

Marc & The Mambas – *Torment & Toreros* (Some Bizzare BIZL4, 1983) Estd market value: **£15**

all that kind of thing. You get people wanting to kill you, you get people loving you obsessively, and a lot of my fans were obsessive about me because they saw me as a bit different and an outsider, rather than one of the regular pop stars of the time. We also weren't singing regular pop songs: we were singing about different things. I get obsessed about things as well, it's part of my nature, so I know it's not a good thing. All that was very hard to deal with.

**You formed Marc & The Mambas in 1982 and went on to collaborate with Jim Thirlwell, Nick Cave, Bronski Beat and Gene Pitney. Were you always planning a solo career?**

Well, I started off as a solo artist, doing performance art at cabarets or whatever you want to call them in Leeds. I did my own backing tracks. That's how I started working with Dave in the first place, with him making backing tracks to my performances. Then I went outside the college to do things in galleries that were quite confrontational – performance art and so on. I loved doing things with Soft Cell, but I liked doing other things as well. There was so much more that I wanted to do. Our office was above Trident Studios in St Anne's Court, so I had that studio to work with at night: it cost me next to nothing to work there from nine at night until six in the morning. So, I used that to my advantage, although my solo albums were done in a very messy way. It was about bringing in different people to collaborate over long, drug-fuelled nights, building songs night after night.

**After Soft Cell split in 1984, you could have faded from view, but you never have. What's the secret?**

I think I did it by taking commercial risks, and by not always trying to follow a commercial formula. That gave me the respect of other musicians, because there wasn't a lot of respect for Soft Cell at first. We were ridiculed for being a synth-pop band, and because Dave and I looked like an odd couple. You know – a keyboard and a vocal, what's that? People were very disparaging at first. I remember the first interview we did with an unnamed music paper: they destroyed us completely. That was the first interview I ever did, and it crushed me. So, when I started doing different things, people noticed, and I started getting a little more respect. People started getting in touch and asking if I would do something with them, and it just blossomed from there. There's always 10 other projects that I'd like to be doing.

**You spent a month in a coma after a motorbike crash in 2004. Did you recover fully?**

I've recovered quite well, but the legacy of that accident is that I have a lot of memory problems. Live, I use a lot more teleprompters than I used to. Other people don't recover so well, and I'm a patron of the charity Headway, for people who are recovering from head injury, because I know what the long-term effects can be. It changes your whole personality, it changes your senses, you smell things differently. For a lot of people that lasts forever, but for me, I mostly got back to an even keel.

**You've released a long sequence of albums since then. Does songwriting inspiration ever dry up?**

Well, as an artist I think it's important to keep making records, especially in this fast-food music era. They can be at any level, whether it's with a major label or just for yourself to put out on your website: it's just important to keep doing it. I go through periods when I can write and periods when I can't, like anybody does, I suppose. If I can't write, I'll curate a record of other people's songs, so that gives me a moment to get back in touch with music and listen to it, and then I'll start writing again. I'm writing for a couple of new albums at the moment. I think, "How many records can I actually do? Maybe no-one really wants a new Marc Almond album." The record company people tell me, "Well, they want the *right* Marc Almond album," but I'm not sure I know what

## "WE WERE SHARKBAIT IN THOSE EARLY DAYS – WE WERE VERY NAIVE"

Photos: Getty

**Purple heartache (this page, l-r): with Gene Pitney in 1989; with Dave Ball in 2021: "I never thought I'd be singing Soft Cell songs at this age"**

that is! [laughs] Someone will have to tell me what the right one is.

**Soft Cell have reformed a couple of times, most recently releasing the album *Happiness Not Included* in 2022.**
I love doing the Soft Cell shows. The songs are a struggle for me to sing because they're way out of my energy level and they're a different style of singing, which probably messes up my voice, but they somehow play themselves: they're a joy. I never thought I'd still be doing Soft Cell songs at this age, and I say to myself, "Aren't I a bit old to be singing Sex Dwarf?" Then again, I've also got a rock group called The Loveless – we do 60s garage-rock and American psychedelia and punk. When I look for songs for that band, it leads me to songs that I used to love and can get back in touch with. That's a lot of fun.

**What was it like working with the Pet Shop Boys on the recent Soft Cell album?**
I had a lovely time with them. They've never hidden the fact that Soft Cell have been an influence on them, and we had a really interesting conversation: Neil [Tennant, PSBs singer] made me re-evaluate our first album. He pointed out that it's a song cycle that tells a whole story, and I realised he was right. It's a bit like musical theatre, which I love. It's a shock, I know – Marc Almond likes musical theatre! [laughs]

**Are you still discovering new music?**
I investigate new music, but it doesn't stay with me. Maybe it's because I'm of an age, maybe it's nostalgia, but I'm rediscovering all the records from the periods of time that I've always loved. Lyrics and melody, and storytelling in songs. I like some spirituality and elemental references, and the idea of getting older and in touch with emotions.

**Are you religious?**
I think I'm a kind of pagan, really, because I'm a very earth person. I love elemental things and for a time I really looked into the whole Druidism thing. I never did all the exams that you're meant to do, but I did read about it, and I love all the different druid laws. You've got to love nature, you've got to love history, and all the things that they appreciate, I appreciate. I try to be in touch with those things rather than being religious because I'm an atheist. I think that if I believe in God I might as well believe in Obi-Wan Kenobi or Gandalf. I'm not anti-religion, though: if someone has their belief system, that's absolutely fine. I'm just anti- what religion is doing to the world. Don't make people live their lives according to the rules of your imaginary friend.

**Your new album, *I'm Not Anyone*, is an emotional examination of identity.**
Yes, I'm singing about who I am, and trying to find my place. I think with every record you make it's about trying to find your place in the world now. I deliberately looked for emotional songs. It's not a songbook album where you cover songs by a single artist, like the Jacques Brel album I did in 1989 [*Jacques*]. I spent a year or more listening to my old records and digging into YouTube. I use Shazam to find song titles from films or from something I hear when I'm out, which still feels like magic to me, and then I'll go to YouTube. I like to look at the process as curating a record, as I would if I was doing a radio show.

**How have you evolved as a singer over the years?**
I've been criticised in the past for being over-emotional and over-dramatic, but as the years have gone on, I've become a much more settled singer. If a song touches me lyrically in some way, then I feel I can sing it. I know when I don't believe in a song because it feels like work, and I'm thinking what to have for dinner while I'm singing it. I don't ever want to feel like that when I'm doing a song. And I don't like doing loads of vocal takes: I think if you haven't got it by take three, you won't get it, because you'll start worrying about singing it well and it'll sound contrived.

**What's more important as a singer, technique or feel?**
Feel. I hate it when singers want you to know how good they are and sing all over the place. It's the *X Factor* syndrome, isn't it, like, "Look how many notes I can fit into this thing!" and people say, "Oh, it's so wonderful and marvellous" and I think, "No, it's not. You've completely ignored the melody, and you're 20 years old and you're singing My Way!"

**Do you still enjoy what you do?**
I'd like to think that I'll never give up music totally, because I love the visceral nature of performing for an audience, but it's getting harder for me because I have bronchial and sinus problems now. Every time I do a tour, it's a battle to get through it. There's only so many songs I can memorise, so I rely on teleprompters. If they're there, I barely look at them, but if they're not there, I get stage fright, I panic, I think, "I'm old, I don't know the songs, I look terrible, I can't do this, my voice is all over the place" and I start forgetting the words to the songs. I'm much more relaxed in a studio.

## "IT'S GETTING HARDER. EVERY TIME I DO A TOUR, IT'S A BATTLE TO GET THROUGH IT"

Photos: Getty; Paul Ripley; Andrew Whitton

Taking a (mike) stand: Almond in 2007




Marc Almond – *Fantastic Star* (Some Bizzare 528 629-2 , 1996) Estimated market value: £5




Marc Almond – *Things We Lost* (Strike Force Entertainment SFE 094M, 2022) Est market value: £18

**How was Covid for you?**
The Covid period sent a lot of people that I know completely doolally. They've never quite got over it. I had some health problems that I haven't had for years – sinusitis and bronchial problems that mean I have to use inhalers every day. I had Covid three or four times, and it really scarred my lungs, which is a nightmare for a singer. That period left me mentally and physically exhausted and with a general sense of unhappiness.

**Is that why you recently relocated to Portugal?**
It was. After Covid I felt so despondent and damaged, I'd lost interest in music, and I'd stopped loving life. I was in very bad health, and I was struggling, so I decided to move. Even though I'm a London person, I'd fallen out of love with London and the UK, and Portugal were inviting musicians and entertainers to come and live there. I didn't know the country very well, but I knew I needed an adventure, so I moved to rural Portugal and bought an unloved plot of land with a wreck of a house on it, and I'm doing it up. I'm making an environmental space there, planting vegetables and trees.

**You told me once that you wouldn't mind ending your days in a fruit garden like Dirk Bogarde.**
Oh, I love Dirk Bogarde's books, when he goes to France and potters about. That's how I imagine myself. Part of me would like to be like Charles Aznavour, who was still singing on the stage at 93 years of age, but another part of me thinks that I really don't know how many more years I can do this for. If I'm lucky enough to do this forever, that's great, but then again, it might be nice just to say goodbye to it all and go to a place in the middle of nowhere and grow oranges and tangerines and lemons. I could happily live like that. RC

**I'm Not Anyone** ***is out on 12 July on BMG. Marc Almond will be touring in September.***

## FULL MARCS
### Five Almond albums to cherish

**Soft Cell *Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret*** (Some Bizzare BZLP 2, 1981) **£10**
The paranoid sound of 1981, encapsulated perfectly via minimalist synths. Even if you weren't a struggling teenager pushed to society's sidelines, your heart still went out to the young Almond, who crammed emotion into every track.

***The Stars We Are*** (Parlophone PCS 7324, 1988) **£8**
Navigating a fine line in and out of synth-pop, Almond stayed relevant with songs such as Tears Run Rings, an absolute banger whose remixes you need to seek out on YouTube right now. Nico guests on this album, too.

***Jacques*** (Some Bizzare BREL 1, 1989) **£15**
Stepping away from electronic music and embracing the music of his idol Jacques Brel, Almond pulled off an instinctual move into dramatic chanson – and in doing so, rejuvenated his solo career.

***Heart On Snow*** (XIII BIS 640 410 2, 2003) **£10**
Almond took a further step into new territory by recording a whole album of covers of Russian romance songs. You get the sense that this was the music he should always have been recording, and indeed he's still exploring similar styles 20 years later.

**Soft Cell *Happiness Not Included*** (BMG 538704541, 2022) **£15**
One benefit of the pandemic was that it yielded a new Cell album, the duo's first since 2005 and only their fifth overall. Glittering, wry and packed with texture, it was a touch lighter than the old stuff, appropriately so given the times.

# JERSEY ROYAL

Overcoming critical derision to sell 130 million albums, Bon Jovi have celebrated their 40th anniversary with a career-spanning documentary series and a return to their trademark feelgood rock after a decade of troubles. **Jon Bon Jovi, David Bryan** and **Tico Torres** tell **John Earls** why they refuse to play live again until they're fully fit, why they're the people's choice, their hopes to be reunited with Richie Sambora… and of secret road trips with Bruce Springsteen.

**Five or six times a year, Jon Bon Jovi and Bruce Springsteen take a drive together into the New Jersey countryside. Their phones are left at home, they don't even listen to the radio, they just talk: about favourite music new and old, of being famous then and now, sport, family… In each other's company, New Jersey's most successful living entertainers really can be regular guys for a couple of hours.**

At least, Bruce Springsteen can.

"I think Bruce thinks of me as his brother now," considers Bon Jovi. "From my perspective, it's always hero worship."

That isn't false modesty. The frontman whose 130-million-selling band is named after him is eternally grateful that his local teenage heroes – Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band and Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes – felt so accessible growing up in the otherwise anonymous suburb of Sayreville.

"Queen, Zeppelin and Elton were on my wall and they were bigger than life," reflects Bon Jovi. "Not only were The E Street Band and the Jukes local, between those two bands there were 17 of them. How could I not run into one of them at the local clubs? They made it seem possible. Southside Johnny didn't need to sell 130 million records to be my hero. I'm still stealing his moves today."

As a teenager, bumping into Clarence Clemons, Billy Rush and other E Street and Asbury Jukes in local clubs made success feel realistic. But those heroes will always sseem like a rung above to Bon Jovi, despite being a global star since *Slippery When Wet* in 1986.

"If I walk into a room and see The E Street Band, I go: 'It's my fucking Beatles!'" he insists. "I might have sold as many records as them by now, but that's who they are to me."

That everyman adoration has been key to Bon Jovi – both frontman and band – since their self-titled debut album was a modest No 43 success in the States 40 years ago. They might have looked as absurd as their 80s poodle rock contemporaries, but Bon Jovi and longtime guitarist Richie Sambora shared Springsteen's knack for writing about the working man, via hits like Livin' On A Prayer, even if they did so while wearing considerably more spandex.

Their own work ethic has also helped Bon Jovi last for 40 years. At the discreetly classy Corinthia Hotel on London's Whitehall, *RC* is Jon Bon Jovi's last interview of the week at 8pm on a Friday. He jokes to his PR: "Is this guy a competition winner? I figure we've reached that stage of putting people in front of me," but he seems attentive, rather than reciting Rock Star Anecdotes Nos 217-268 in lieu of answers. He looks like a 62-year-old singer should look, silver hair lightly ruffled after hours in front of the press, the occasional actual laughter line showing as he recalls seeing Kiss aged 13 with his friend Snake. Only a pristine, box fresh leather jacket is a bit much.

Earlier, drummer Tico Torres and keyboardist David Bryan had explained the band's dedication among the partying. At 70, Torres is Bon Jovi's self-proclaimed "old guy", noting: "Going onstage is like time travel. I get to be 16 up there, then when I get off, I feel 70 again." While the thoughtful Bryan is the Jovite who most resembles his 80s self with his tight, shoulder-length curls, the gruffly accented Torres is the band's Steven Van Zandt, most likely to convincingly portray an amiable wise guy. After asking *RC* if he can get me a drink from the duo's interview suite, Torres duly pours a still water into a champagne flute.

"We never went onstage wasted," reveals Bryan of Bon Jovi's rules for partying. "We weren't a lifestyle band. We cared about the music, the same as the other East Coast bands, whereas the West Coast bands cared about getting fucked-up."

**"WHEN WE CAME TOGETHER ON *SLIPPERY*, EVERYTHING CHANGED"**

Torres continues: "If you can't get high on the music onstage, there's something wrong with you. After a show, we partied. We had no problem with that. But we went to work first: that's the Jersey ethic."

Both musicians are quick to recognise they were able to mix the good times with music that continued to sell astronomically thanks to their singer's additional determination. Bryan says: "Bon Jovi is a team, but Jon is our quarterback. He has the ball. But if nobody defends him, he'll get knocked down and he can't throw it."

Bon Jovi later continues the analogy:

"Everybody has a role to play, but there could only be one quarterback. If it wasn't me, it wouldn't have been the guys in the band keeping it together once we skyrocketed. This would not have been the same thing."

The singer recognises how luck also played its part in their rise, with the phenomenal team that worked on *Slippery When Wet*. After Bon Jovi's first two albums were recorded in New Jersey, they decamped to Vancouver at new producer Bruce Fairbairn's insistence. They were engineered by future Metallica producer Bob Rock, while – in a bid to potentially start a sideline co-writing for other artists that never had time to get going – the band drafted in the then unknown Desmond Child as co-writer. His first suggestion: how about writing a song called You Give Love A Bad Name?

"Bob Rock was an off-the-shelf engineer who was paid $15,000 on *Slippery*," says Bon Jovi with the grin that's earned him the nickname The Billion Dollar Smile. It's disarming up close, not least because those teeth look filler-free and genuine. "Bruce Fairbairn had produced Loverboy, but nothing else anybody was writing home about. And the only hit Desmond Child had co-written was a disco song for KISS, I Was Made For Lovin' You, that Gene Simmons *hated*. But when we all came together on that record, everything about us all changed forever."

It was a dream album, recorded in a burst of inspiration with Torres and bassist Alec John Such's rhythm parts done in four days. Yet even here, the drummer is keen to emphasise it wasn't all heaven sent. "We couldn't get Wanted Dead Or Alive right," recalls Torres, who rejected an offer from Ace Frehley to join Kiss in 1980 while playing with glam rockers T Roth And Another Pretty Face, because he didn't want to be disguised under the KISS make-up. "We tried three different versions and weren't happy with any of them. So we went to a Japanese restaurant, drank a lot of sake and came back to the studio at 1am. One more take and it was magic. Sometimes you've got to walk away before a song works, sometimes it never does. There's no way to know if a song will work."

Photo: Jacquet Droz

While Bon Jovi admits of the band's first two albums, "None of those songs were skyrockets to anywhere", they at least allowed the quintet to develop live, from arena tours supporting KISS, The Scorpions and Judas Priest. "We were always a great live band," states Bon Jovi. "I could speak the audience's language and connect with them, that was our magic. I was certainly cognisant of what it's like to be the kid in the back row. I still project to the kid in the 99th row when we play, with the caveat that this old man can't see into the 99th row anymore."

For Bryan, that Scorpions tour was key: "Those guys were just relentless. They always walked up there and kicked ass to the nth degree. We learned you've got to do that, no matter where you are on the planet, every fucking night, whether you're in Muskogee, Oklahoma or Murphysboro, Illinois."

While Torres fondly remembers hanging out on The Scorpions' tour bus more than his own band's, so that he could get schooled in how to play big shows, supporting Judas Priest was more instructive in overcoming hostility. Bon Jovi's first hit, cheery singalong Runaway, had recently been released. Torres grimaces: "We had Runaway, breezing along, while Priest were playing at a million miles an hour. Their fans hated us. *Hated* us. They couldn't wait to hit me with a lighter. They threw endless shit at us. Our view was: 'You're going to fucking like us. We'll die doing it, but I'm going to kill you to make this work.'"

Such touring war stories are writ large on Bon Jovi's new album *Forever*, which starts with the self-explanatory one-two feelgood blast of Legendary and We Made It Look Easy. After the band's previous decade, they're a statement that Bon Jovi have remembered how to have fun again.

Richie Sambora quit in 2013, leading to the more exploratory *This House Is Not For Sale* three years later. The following *2020* housed longtime Democrat campaigner Bon Jovi's most political lyrics, including writing about George Floyd's killing on American Reckoning: a well-judged lament, but another universe from Bad Medicine. Then Such died from a heart attack aged 70 in 2022. His addiction issues had caused him to leave in 1994, replaced by former session bassist Hugh McDonald.

"We did what we could about the world on *2020*, but it's not a joyful record," admits Bon Jovi. "*This House Is Not For Sale* was a statement record, creating songs in different shapes. I love that record and stand by it, but it's not a joyous record.

"In the last 10 years, I've realised how much this band's legacy means," he adds. "The defection of Richie and the passing of Alec shook me to the bone, but it wasn't going to ever stop me doing what I do, nor stop David, Tico or Hugh from their livelihoods. That wouldn't have been fair. You go through all these things and see that your friends are still standing. I've got men in my life who I love and who have my back. That's a reason to realise that joy is still there in your life. You can't write a record like *Forever* unless you're feeling joy."

Indeed, *Forever* houses classic Jovi party anthems in Walls Of Jericho's glam chant and the Sympathy For The Devil-style loose groove of The People's House, while Living Proof even reintroduces the talkbox guitar popularised in Livin' On A Prayer. ("We've tried to put the talkbox on other records," notes Bryan. "It doesn't work more times than it does.")

They're all songs deserving a place in Bon Jovi's live show. But Bon Jovi have been unable to play live since 2022, when their singer had throat surgery, finally relenting to an operation on his vocal cords after realising a rigorous training regime couldn't cure vocal problems he'd endured since 2015.

It's a recovery documented in the satisfyingly honest recent four-part 40th anniversary retrospective *Thank You, Goodnight* on Disney+. Directed by Gotham Chopra, a filmmaker specialising in sports documentaries, the series ends with Bon Jovi believing his voice has 80 per cent returned, stating the band won't play again until it's 100 per cent.

**"IF TRUMP GETS IN, WHO KNOWS WHAT AMERICA'S FUTURE MIGHT BE?"**

In person, that voice is far smoother than the crackling rasp heard at the finale of *Thank You, Goodnight*. So… "I'm somewhere around 90 per cent now," the singer cautions. "I won't book a show until I'm consistent every day. I'm working on it like a sonofabitch." He rules out the idea of doing occasional shows if a tour is too strenuous, explaining: "If you can do five shows, you can do 50."

Bryan admits it's frustrating not to be touring, declaring: "We're like racehorses in the barn: we need to get out and run. I'm jamming with all my friends in bands locally because I just want to play. But we'll do it. It's just a question of stamina. Jon can run like a motherfucker for 24 miles. Now we need to get those last two miles from him. It'll happen."

Less certain is the fate of Richie Sambora. Bon Jovi's talismanic former guitarist features heavily in *Thank You, Goodnight*, an endearing and goofy commentator on their history. While Bon Jovi himself admits in the film that he pushed Sambora too hard into returning from rehab to tour 2009's patchy *The Circle*, neither frontman nor guitarist are clear on why he hasn't returned 11 years after Sambora simply didn't show up for a concert in Calgary – especially when there doesn't seem to be any lingering animosity.

"Richie is a brother and we love him," maintains Bryan. "It's up to Richie. We never shut the door on him, he just never came back to work. Anything is possible." Usually an ebullient talker, Bon Jovi is hesitant in trying to share how he feels about his musical soulmate – seemingly from not wanting to offend Sambora, rather than the usual, "Let's not talk about *him"* dismissal of an old bandmate. He considers: "It's heartbreaking that Richie left, and that he did it in that way. We were shocked. I miss him personally and

**Don't get mad, get seven – the expanded Bon Jovi line-up in 2024 (l-r): David Bryan, Everett Bradley, Hugh McDonald, John Shanks, Phil X, Jon Bon Jovi, Tico Torres**

creatively, in the studio and as an integral part of the band onstage. But if you don't show up for work, your boss is going to say: 'What the fuck? Get help. And if you don't want to get help…'" A pause, and a frustrated sigh. "It's 11 years now. David and Tico have seen Richie once and I've seen him twice. It's not like we haven't tried."

Of course, there's the need to be respectful to Sambora's replacement. LA guitarist Phil X, formerly of power poppers Powder, learned Bon Jovi's set overnight in replacing Sambora, meaning their 2013 tour only missed one show. Torres points out: "Phil has found his voice on *Forever*. That doesn't happen overnight." Bon Jovi adds: "Trying to pretend to be Richie would have been a curse. Phil's ability to fit in and stand out while he's doing so is a gift. I won't ever co-write with Phil but, boy, did he fill a big fucking void."

If Sambora's estrangement remains unresolved, at least Jon Bon Jovi's personal life is settled. Having recorded I Got The Girl about his five-year-old daughter Stephanie on *Crush* in 2000, *Forever* has Kiss The Bride, about Stephanie's impending marriage: "I only wrote I Got The Girl five minutes ago, so figure that one out."

The album's other personal ballad, I Wrote You A Song, is for Bon Jovi's wife, Dorothea. They met in 1980, when Jon was 18 and Dorothea was 17. "I wrote that song in the middle of the night while my wife was asleep," he smiles. "My rear end was up in the air as I was getting the first verse down on the notebook by the bed. My wife likes that song, but it doesn't stop her saying something like, 'You need to take the trash out' to me every day. A big part of our relationship is that we grew together. We're as thoroughly unimpressed with each other as we are impressed with each other."

If *Forever* is more celebratory than *2020*, it doesn't mean Bon Jovi has stopped his interest in politics. He's actively campaigned for the Democrats in every US Presidential election since 2000 but admits he's far from certain over whether Joe Biden will see off Donald Trump in November.

"Like everyone else, I'm scared to death," he admits. "The difference is no one saw 2016 coming. This time, we have a warning about what Trump would be like. Whether that will make enough of a difference, I don't know. The President is *old* and nobody has a lot of faith in his Vice-President. But nobody wants Trump. If he gets in, who knows what America's future might be?"

Alongside his longstanding work with his homelessness charity *The Bon Jovi Soul Foundation*, his campaigning side would have shocked the critics who routinely mocked Bon Jovi as knuckleheaded cartoon rockers, to be safely dismissed with Motley Crue and Poison when the band first emerged. (In fairness, 1990's *New Jersey* was nearly called *Sons Of Beaches*.)

"Oh, *Rolling Stone* hated us from the beginning," laughs Torres, as Bryan interjects: "Critics don't buy tickets. We were the people's choice, and that's the best award you're ever going to get. Everything in music is a business, but you can't get past the fact of people liking you."

Hopefully, the people's choice will be back in front of the people soon enough. Meanwhile, Jon Bon Jovi can reflect on those 40 years with Bruce Springsteen next time they're both back home. It's clear why Bon Jovi loves hanging out with The Boss – so what has Springsteen learned from Jon Bon Jovi?

"Ohhh," he sighs, loudly. "I hope there are some things in my life Bruce can admire, whether it's my tenacity, or my ability to keep everybody together. Maybe my philanthropy is something special to me. And my wife. My relationship with my wife is certainly something."

With that, Bon Jovi can finally rest his voice again. The finishing line of his vocal marathon is nearly in sight.

***Bon Jovi's new album,* Forever, *is on EMI.* Thank You, Goodnight: The Bon Jovi Story *is streaming on Disney +.***

**Caff society: the classic BJ quartet in 2007, before the departure of Richie Sambora (second right)**

## **BON JOVI** Select Discography

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 84 | Vertigo VER 11 | **She Don't Know Me/Breakout** (p/s) | **£8** |
| 84 | Vertigo VER 14 | **Runaway/Breakout (live)** (p/s) | **£8** |
| 84 | Vertigo VERX 14 | **Runaway/Breakout (live)/Runaway (live)** (12", p/s) | **£15** |
| 85 | Vertigo VER 19 | **In And Out Of Love/Roulette (live)** (p/s) | **£7** |
| 85 | Vertigo VERP 19 | **In And Out Of Love/Roulette (live)** (picture disc) | **£30** |
| 85 | Vertigo VERDP 22 | **The Hardest Part Is The Night/Always Run To You//Tokyo Road (live)/ Shot Through The Heart (live)** (double pack, gatefold p/s) | **£8** |
| 85 | Vertigo VERXR 22 | **Red Hot And Two Parts Live: The Hardest Part Is The Night/ Tokyo Road (live)/In And Out Of Love (live)** (12", p/s, red vinyl) | **£15** |
| 88 | Vertigo VERHP 38 | **SLIPPERY WHEN WET** (LP, picture disc with poster) | **£15** |
| 88 | Vertigo VERHP 62 | **NEW JERSEY** (LP, picture disc, stickered PVC sleeve) | **£15** |
| 95 | Mercury 528 248-1 | **THESE DAYS** (2-LP) | **£60** |

# DON'T STREAM IT'S OVER

While many bands of a certain age struggle to balance the desire to keep moving with their audience's demand to hear the hits, **Neil Finn** and **Crowded House** remain as passionate about their back catalogue as they are their latest recorded work. Besides, streaming exposes their songs to new generations and they're happy to go with the flow. As Finn tells **Pete Paphides**: "You can't be angry with an algorithm."

**Told that *Record Collector* would be arriving at 4pm, Neil Finn figured this would finally afford him the chance to ease the effects of the jet lag. It's been two days since he arrived in London from his hometown of Auckland in New Zealand, but any sleep lasting longer than two hours has eluded him. In the early hours of the morning, he awoke in his Marylebone hotel bed fretting about the session Crowded House were due to perform for BBC Radio 2's Vernon Kay on his mid-morning show. Three songs in total, with the station's in-house orchestra.**

In the event they did something old, something new and something borrowed: their 1992 hit, Four Seasons In One Day; recent single, Oh Hi; and a version of Petula Clark's Downtown. As for something blue, well, anyone even passingly familiar with their body of work will know that beneath the surface of every Crowded House standard seemingly built for mass participation – Don't Dream It's Over, Weather With You, Fall At Your Feet, Better Be Home Soon – lurk deeper undercurrents of melancholy that, decades previously, saw some perceptive wag label Finn's songwriting style as "Leonard [Cohen] and McCartney".

Should you have heard the session – executed as it was, with seemingly effortless insouciance – you might wonder what aspect of it could have possibly been prompting Finn's nocturnal anxieties. "Oh, it was just the thought of screwing up live on radio," he explains, "The conductor's there and he's going to signal you in at a certain moment. And so, of course, even though it went great – you're so full of adrenaline that you go back to your hotel to sleep, and you've never felt so wired in all your life!" There's no self-pity in Finn's demeanour, more an amused exasperation at his own shortcomings.

Mercifully, he isn't alone this afternoon. Also here is long-serving Crowded House bassist (and sleeve artist) Nick Seymour, whose air of Tiggerish enthusiasm might in part be explained by the fact that he only had to travel here from Sligo, where he has lived for the past few years. A slight limp sustained at a record company showcase yesterday when Seymour got carried away during a spontaneous version of The Age Of Aquarius is, he reasons, "An occupational hazard. People come to see Crowded House precisely because we're unique among our peers for being word perfect on the entire soundtrack of *Hair*."

"Even," adds Finn, "though we weren't necessarily aware of that prior to trying it."

Given the ubiquity of their music across four decades, it seems somehow surprising that Crowded House's new studio album, *Gravity Stairs,* is just the eighth to bear their imprint. The band is something of a family affair these days, with Finn's two sons, Liam and Elroy, respectively playing guitar and drums, augmented by Seymour and, on keyboards, Mitchell Froom. Even though Seymour is the only original member, Finn hymns the "occult power of a band name – a collective identity which allows you to aspire to the values represented by that name." Having blooded the current line-up on a world tour throughout 2022, Finn was keen to document the "mutual understanding" that had accrued between them. Convening in an Australian studio, beside the spectacular golden sands of Byron Bay, Finn presented the rest of Crowded House with demos "which they duly ran with and, in some cases, totally reimagined".

In the recording of most albums, there's usually a track which shines the Anglepoise on the space where, before long, all the other songs will duly appear. On *Gravity Stairs*, it was Magic Piano, the song featuring the line which would give the album its name – a mesmerising opener whose beginnings go back to the Greek island retreat where Finn and his wife Sharon spend their summers. "The gravity stairs are these giant, wide, heavy stone steps that you have to climb on the way back from the local taverna. And obviously, you've had a few drinks – and somehow that got woven into [1940s children's audio story, created for Capitol Records] Sparky The Magic Piano, which I was playing to my grandson, which featured this robot voice like an early vocoder."

Finn's recollections of many of his best-loved songs involve "a kind of dreaming to order". This, he says, is the "sweet spot" – something which mirrors the moment you catch a thought on the transition between waking and sleeping, "when things start to get surreal." That's certainly where the heavy action on beloved deep cuts like Walking On The Spot (*Together Alone*, 1993), and Isolation (*Intriguer*, 2010) seems to happen, and it also drives the prevalent mood of *Gravity Stairs*: especially on the somniferous small-hours shuffle of Black Water, White Circle and Thirsty, which Finn fashioned from an instrumental by Elroy.

Equally impossible to miss is the influence of the local Taverna in one of the album's indisputable standouts, the plaintive bouzouki lilt of Some Greater Plan, a song whose genesis actually goes back to an unfinished musical that Neil had started writing with his brother Tim, based on Mervyn Peake's 1953 novel, *Mr Pye*, "about a guy who is consumed by the evangelical urge to go to the island of Sark and shower it with kindness and love in order to turn it into a sort of heaven on earth". But once again, just like dreams, songs can suddenly change direction: "So there's something from my dad's war diaries from where he was stationed in Florence. He gatecrashed his way into the officers' club at the Baglioni Ballroom in Florence, and set eyes on this girl, a diplomat's daughter. He asked her to dance, and they had a two-week romance. This became enshrined in the family mythology – he'd sometimes take to speaking Italian, to which Mum would roll her eyes and say, 'I suppose that's what Nada used to say, is it?'"

If you've already heard one song from *Gravity Stairs*, then it will almost certainly be Oh Hi, a moreish nod to the heyday of FM pop which glued itself to radio playlists as effectively as an Extinction Rebellion protester to London Bridge. For a song which glides with such apparent ease, it's surprising to learn that it took Finn several re-recordings to get it right. To these ears, it sounds like a great lost late 70s Fleetwood Mac song. Back in 2018, Finn took a busman's holiday around the world with Fleetwood Mac after Lindsey Buckingham's sudden departure.

**Finns ain't what they used to be: Neil today and (right), mementos from previous staging posts in the 30-plus-year career of Crowded House**

**"WHEN DID I MISS BEING IN A BAND? THE FIRST INTERVIEW?"**

Photos: Abe Mora

Could Oh Hi perhaps have been written with a view to possible inclusion on a future Fleetwood Mac album? Finn seems momentarily caught short by the question. "Well, there were moments when I was definitely channeling John McVie as I was recording the demo. So yeah, that's quite well spotted, really."

From a distance, suggests *Record Collector*, the whole adventure with Fleetwood Mac – which stemmed from the friendship that Finn struck with Mick Fleetwood after the latter appeared at the New Zealand Music Awards in 2017 – seemed like a wild and somewhat random ride. Suddenly, there you are singing Go Your Own Way with Stevie Nicks standing right next to you.

"Now that a few years have elapsed," ponders Finn, "it barely feels like it happened."

"It definitely did," confirms Seymour, "because I was in the audience watching you in Dublin."

What must that have felt like for Seymour to see the lead singer of his band up there? Kind of weird? "Oh, I was actually really proud," he replies. "It felt like going to see my brother earning his stripes in a new environment. Suddenly you're rooting for them…"

So Finn wasn't holding out for the possibility of getting to make an album as a fully-fledged member of Fleetwood Mac? It seems that he might well have been were it not for the intra-band politics that have rendered the Mac an almost exclusively touring entity in recent years. "I felt sad for them in a way," reflects Finn, "that they weren't as excited about the possibility of another reinvention. Mick would have loved

**Only natural – Crowded House today, featuring two of Neil Finn's sons in the line-up (l-r): Nick Seymour, Liam Finn, Finn Sr, Mitchell Froom, Elroy Finn**

to, but it wasn't really on. Still, for me, it was interesting to see up close how the enormity of the Fleetwood Mac legacy has somehow suppressed an ability to be able to move forward into something new."

"Whereas Crowded House," suggests Seymour, "on the other hand…"

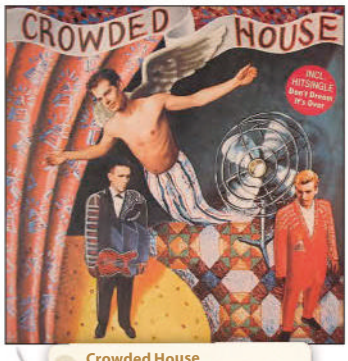
*Record Collector* puts it to the pair that some bands seem to really feel the weight of their legacy when it comes to recording new music, like it's a dead weight forever attached to them – whereas with others, such as Crowded House, it walks alongside them, freeing them up to keep making new history.

Finn stares into the dregs of his espresso as if they might help him figure out why that might be, before Seymour comes to his aid. "Well, I think that what you said… about the songs being alive… I mean, it really does feel like that at times. And in a way that catches you short."

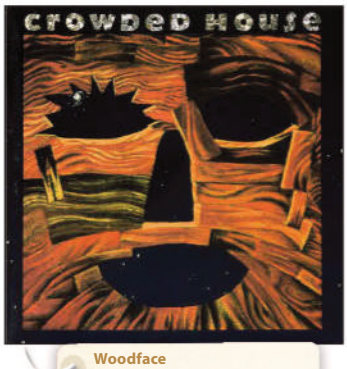
By way of illustration, he thinks back to the set they played at yesterday's showcase – the moment in Fall At Your Feet when, 30 years ago, the chorus would have come in and, following Seymour's deployment of the first harmony, drummer Paul Hester would then follow through with the second one.

In that moment, says Seymour, he forgot that not only was Hester not in the band, but that Hester – who suffered from depression – had taken his own life 19 years ago. "It's almost impossible to describe, but the grief descends upon you all over again. And I don't know if you saw, but I suddenly became really teary."

It's taken Crowded House a long time to find a way of functioning spontaneously and joyously as the classic three-piece line-up (briefly augmented by brother Tim on 1991's *Woodface*) that sustained them through those first four albums. The very first time your correspondent attempted to see them in action was at the end of an eight-hour bus ride from the market town of Lampeter in West Wales to the tiny Borderline venue in central London – a naive undertaking given that the show was sold out. However, the patience of those who forlornly joined the returns queue at 4pm was rewarded when the group turned up to soundcheck and took mercy on the waiting fans by playing an impromptu acoustic gig on the cobbles outside the venue. Hester's manic energy seemed to set the tempo at which that lineup of Crowded House moved. Drily but affectionately, Neil Finn singles out the drummer's penchant for surreal monologues: "He was a man of many gifts, both musical and for talking about masturbating in front of 20,000 people."

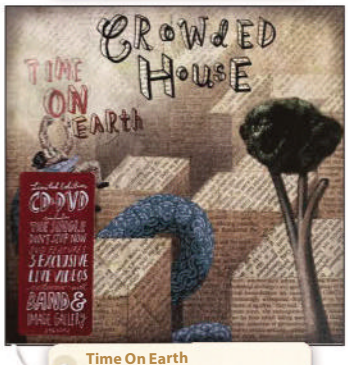



**Crowded House**
(Capitol 24 0555 1, 1986)
Estimated market value: **£10**



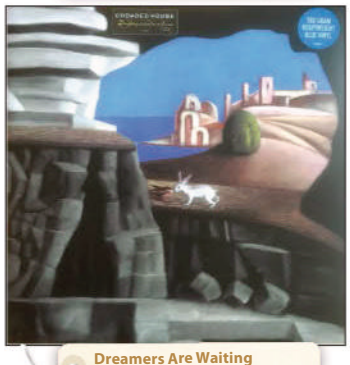

**Woodface**
(Capitol EST 2144, 1991)
Estimated market value: **£35**

**Together Alone**
(Capitol ESTU 2215, 1993)
Estimated market value: **£50**




**Time On Earth**
(Parlophone 3960271, 2007)
Estimated market value: **£40**

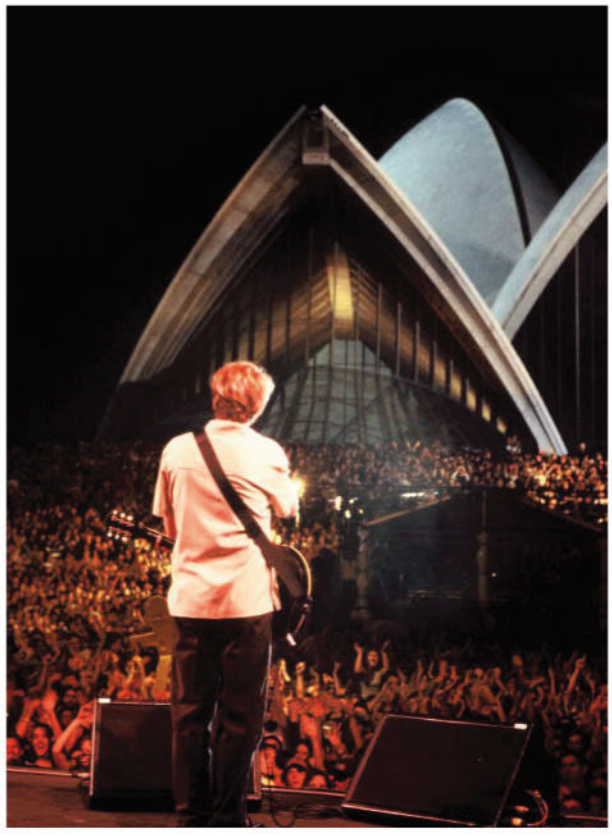
**Intriguer**
(UMGI 00602527415185, 2010 )
Estimated market value: **£20**



**Dreamers Are Waiting**
(EMI 3532963, 2021)
Estimated market value: **£15**

However, in 1996, when Finn decided to call time on this lineup of Crowded House, Hester had already left two years previously. After a farewell gig before an audience of 120,000 on the steps of Sydney Opera House, 10 years would elapse before Finn resurrected the Crowded House imprimatur. However, the regrets came considerably sooner: "When did I first realise that I missed being in a band? Hmm, let's see. The first photo session? The first interview? You leave a band, and you relish the freedom of making whatever record you want, but somewhere along the way, some of the character of what you did gets lost. So, I'm not sure that more options are an altogether good thing. Anyone who has walked into a room with five remote controls on the coffee table will know what I'm talking about."

When Crowded House finally did come back, it was with 2007's *Time On Earth*, a record which heralded the second and most short-lived of the band's three incarnations.



**Landmark show: Crowded House play a 'farewell' gig to 120,000 people in Sydney in front of the Opera House in 1996**

## "I LIKE THE FACT LABELS CAN'T CONTROL WHICH SONGS GO VIRAL"

This was a lineup which, despite staying together for 2010's *Intriguer*, never quite gelled in Finn's eyes.

Perhaps the portents were writ large with the first high-profile show by this iteration of the group, a heroic but ultimately misconceived billing second to Rage Against The Machine at their 2007 Coachella headline set. That they managed to complete their set amid a blizzard of projectiles was a wonder to behold. "I'm not sure whose idea that was," ponders Finn, "but we gave it our best shot, didn't we?"

"I tell you who did give it their best shot," says Seymour. "That Rage Against The Machine fan who threw that beer bottle and, from 80ft away, managed to topple your mic stand."

It turns out that all Finn needed to do was wait for both of his sons to become old enough to join Crowded House #3, whose arrival was heralded with 2021's *Dreamers Are Waiting* album. And evidence came in the form of the group's televised Glastonbury 2022 performance, featuring pretty much every Crowded House song ever to trouble the Top 40, with a rendition of The Kinks' Sunny Afternoon thrown in for good measure – Finn says he felt like there was something there for the taking.

A walk around the site in the hours prior to their Friday afternoon set took him right up to the Strummerville area, where he gazed over the counterculural Brigadoon assembled before him. "Festivals are different to normal gigs," he contends, "because you know what songs you have to play to make the maximum impact. It wasn't quite Queen at *Live Aid*, but it wasn't Coachella, either."

What seems incredible is that, despite literally having performed the song thousands of times, Finn seems able to find a way to lose himself in Don't Dream It's Over. "Yeah, it's funny," he muses, "I've never really got sick of it. I mean, it's been covered so much, that I get an almost competitive urge to… like, if someone else did it, I'm minded to say, 'Yeah, you did a pretty good job, but this is how it *really* goes!' Some songs really work in front of a big crowd. I remember ending our Glastonbury set with I Got You [a Finn-penned hit for Split Enz in 1980] and that's a fun one to drop in because a lot of young people know it without even realising how or why they know it."

Presumably that's something to do with the way streaming – the constant availability of all music from all eras – is accessible to everyone now, right?

"I think so," he says. "And I quite like the fact that record companies have no control over which old songs can go viral, especially on TikTok, where it really does just happen organically…"

Does Finn ever check his streaming stats to see how they're holding up against ensuing generations of pop stars? As the question lands, there seems to be nothing in the singer's existing repertoire of facial expressions that can deal with even the passing insinuation that he was ever a pop star. Nick Seymour, on the other hand, is thoroughly conversant with the band's numbers and, if need be, is happy to share them with total strangers. "I was recently at a party in rural Sligo, where there were multiple families and younger kids. They're all in one room and there's a big TV screen, a couple of iPads and stuff. One of the boys knew I was in a band. He's like, "Oh, play a song from your band." So, Don't Dream It's Over comes on, and one teenage girl – a real sort of 'troubled teen' – goes [affects air of surly diffidence], 'Oh yeah? So how many streams are there?' And I'm like, 'Oh, let me see.' It was 550 million. She's like, 'What?' And I realised that is the reality of it."

Finn seems slightly dumbfounded by the statistics. "I'm not sure I want to know what my stats are, but I'm figuring that a lot of it is to do with algorithms. And that every time someone flicks forward on a Spotify playlist, the algorithms are taking note. I find that scarier than thinking about radio programmers saying no to your record. You can't be angry with an algorithm."

"Why not?" wonders Seymour.

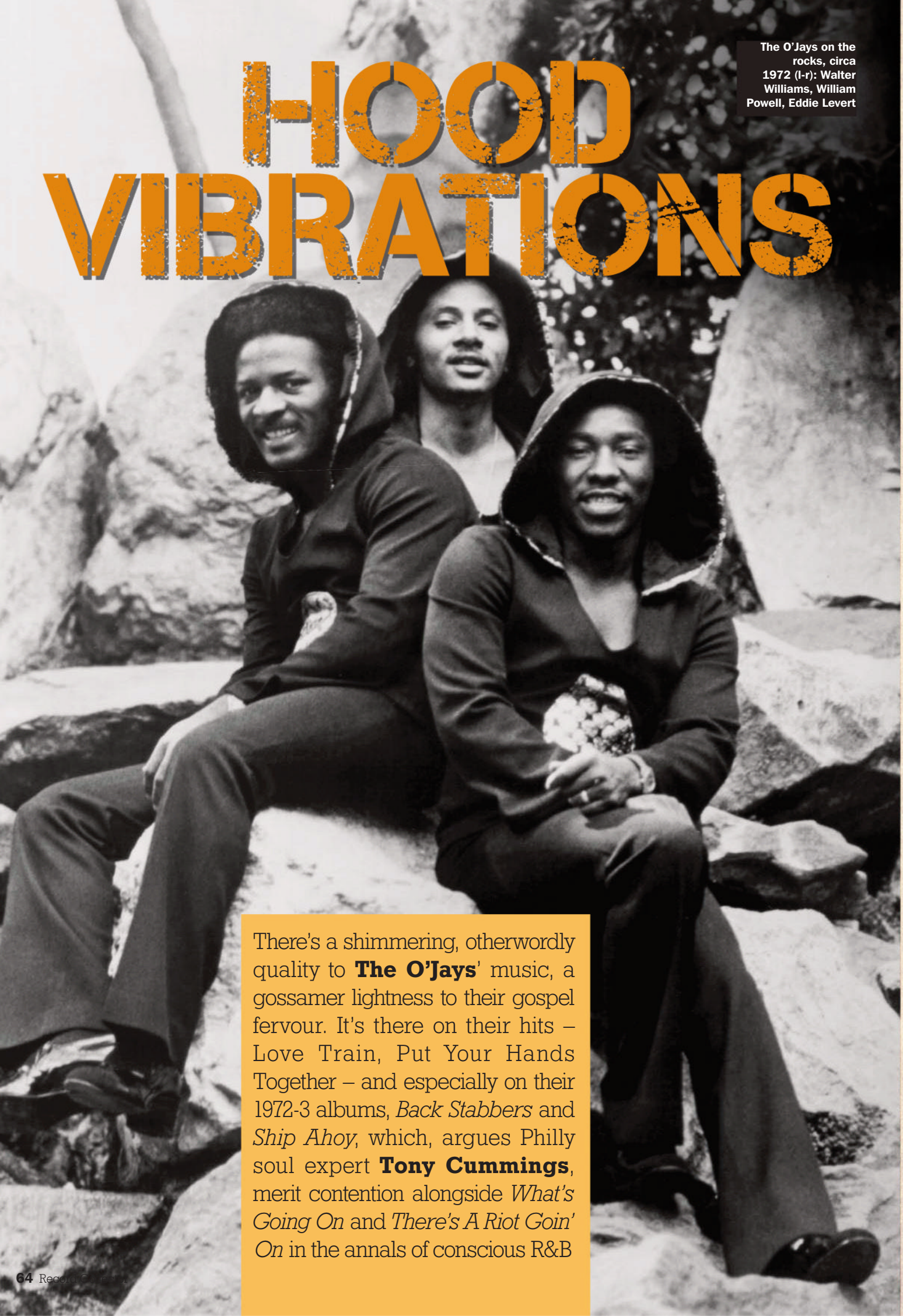
"Well," reasons Finn, "you're basically remonstrating with a void, aren't you?"

Seymour empathetically leans forward and places a hand on his singer's thigh. As if he doesn't want to be the one to tell him, but someone's got to do it.

"But isn't that, in a sense, what we're all doing, Neil?" RC

**Gravity Stairs *is released 31 May by Sony BMG.***

# HOOD VIBRATIONS



The O'Jays on the rocks, circa 1972 (l-r): Walter Williams, William Powell, Eddie Levert

There's a shimmering, otherwordly quality to **The O'Jays**' music, a gossamer lightness to their gospel fervour. It's there on their hits – Love Train, Put Your Hands Together – and especially on their 1972-3 albums, *Back Stabbers* and *Ship Ahoy*, which, argues Philly soul expert **Tony Cummings**, merit contention alongside *What's Going On* and *There's A Riot Goin' On* in the annals of conscious R&B

**If you were to gather together a bunch of soul buffs and ask them to name the greatest album ever, you'd be sure to hear named *What's Going On, Otis Blue* and *Songs In The Key Of Life*. One album bound to be acclaimed is *Ship Ahoy* by The O'Jays. *The Miami Herald* once called the title track "a dark, atmospheric, frightening masterpiece" while several DJs and critics today have suggested that the album's For The Love Of Money is the greatest piece of dance music ever recorded.**

What is certain is that every component necessary in creating a true classic album came together in time (the early months of 1973) and space (Philadelphia's Sigma Sound Studio). The individuals that producers and songwriters Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff assembled to record *Ship Ahoy* were as good as anyone working in popular music. Here were a vocal group whose lead singer, Eddie Levert, could wrench the listener from reflective introspection to surging joy; an arranger with deep jazz roots, Bobby Martin, who had expanded his skills to create luxuriant string and horn arrangements with moonlighting symphonians; songwriters like Bunny Sigler, Gene McFadden and John Whitehead; and hand-picked session musicians who had, by 1973, been dubbed MFSB (Mother, Father, Sister, Brother) – Norman Harris, Roland Chambers and Bobby Eli (guitars), Vince Montana (vibes), Ronnie Baker and Anthony Jackson (bass), Earl Young (drums) and Larry Washington (conga, bongos), often with Leon Huff on electric piano – who were a foundation stone on which Gamble and Huff could build their Philly soul sound of the 70s. It was like the way Berry Gordy built the Motown sound of the 60s with the Funk Brothers.

The O'Jays' roots were black church. Eddie Levert and Walter Williams sang together as a teenage gospel duo and, by 1958, Eddie, though only 16, had developed an exceptional soulful tenor voice able to replicate the rasps and hollers that classic gospel quartets like The Swan Silvertones and The Blind Boys Of Mississippi brought to church music. But there was no money to be made by singing gospel. So, the duo got together with William Powell, Bill Isles and Bobby Massey, called themselves The Triumphs and began singing at private parties and the local YMCA. After a while they landed a regular slot at the Revilot Lounge in Buffalo where they'd be backed by musos who were eventually to become The Ohio Players.

By 1960 The Triumphs were ready to make a record and auditioned for Sid Nathan's King Records. Impressed with their doo wop harmonies but not their moniker, there being other Triumphs out there, Nathan renamed them The Mascots. But their King record flopped.

Back in Canton, deejay Eddie O'Jay, a major figure in 60s R&B radio, took an interest in the quintet. O'Jay introduced the team to Berry Gordy's ex-wife, Thelma, who'd started a label, Daco, and she hired Don Davis to produce a record with something of the emergent Motown sound about it. Nobody liked the Mascots name. Levert explained, "Eddie O'Jay suggested we use his name temporarily till we found another one."

Despite a release on both Daco and Apollo, Miracles didn't sell (although many years later it was to be discovered by Britain's Northern soul scene). The group were then linked up with H. B. Barnum, the extraordinarily versatile LA-based music man. He had once sung with The Robins before they became The Coasters, played scorching boogie piano on the original version of Nut Rocker – credited to Jack B. Nimble and the Quicks – and years later ended up arranging everyone from Frank Sinatra and Count Basie to Little Richard and The Supremes. Barnum tried out The O'Jays on his own label, Little Star Records, and their second single got The O'Jays into the charts… just. Unusually for a black act, Lonely Drifter made No 93 on *Billboard*'s Hot 100 pop chart but never showed on their R&B listings. Maybe it sounded *too* much like The Drifters' On Broadway. But at least it had made a small dent in the national consciousness.

Barnum started taking his O'Jays productions along to a bona fide big label, Imperial Records, and delivered four more singles for the group. But none charted. In 1965 Imperial took over and sent The O'Jays to New Orleans where producers Joe Saracero and Tommy LiPuma and arranger Harold Baptiste got the group an R&B hit with Lipstick Traces (On My Cigarette), the song Allen Toussaint had once penned for Benny Spellman and which remained a mainstay of their live set for decades to come. But subsequent attempts to milk the rich New Orleans catalogue didn't deliver Imperial with more hits. In 1965 the dogged touring quintet enjoyed R&B hits with New Yorker Van McCoy's song, Let It All Out, and another with the Eddie Levert-penned Stand In For Love.

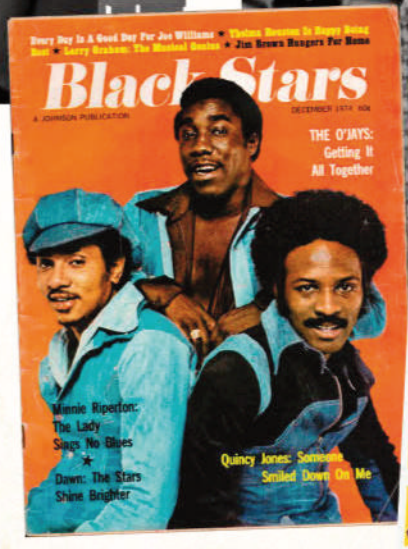
Clearly, though, the group's Imperial deal wasn't giving them the breakthrough pop hit needed. After a single for Minit Records, The O'Jays tried their luck with Larry Uttal's New York label Bell Records. Musically, it seemed a good fit. Producers George Kerr and Richard Tee took The O'Jays to Broadway Studios and cut the creamy soul ballad, I'll Be Sweeter Tomorrow (Than I Was Today). It landed the group their first Top 10 R&B chart hit and a 66 Hot 100 placing.

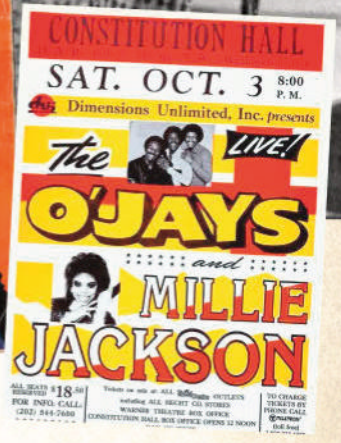
But the follow-up singles did less well. It was a frustrating time for the group. They were well enough known to get bottom-of-the-bill bookings on the multi-artist package shows at places like Chicago's Regal Theatre and New York's Apollo. Their R&B chart hits could land them bookings in smaller clubs across America. But they still hadn't broken through to the showbiz upper echelons.

Then the Canton, Ohio team came to the attention of Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff. The Philly duo had transformed a doo wop group, The Intruders, into regular R&B chartmakers and the industry was recognising G&H's production and songwriting talents as they landed hits for Jerry Butler, Archie Bell & The Drells and Wilson Pickett. But the duo had come to realise the marketing and distribution limitations of their Gamble Records and needed a tie-up with a national industry big timer. They thought they'd found it with Chess Records. The company who had pioneered old school blues in the 50s had moved on to land soul hits and been taken over by major corporation GRT. Kenny Gamble had an excellent relationship with

**IT WAS LIKE THE WAY BERRY GORDY BUILT THE MOTOWN SOUND OF THE 60S WITH THE FUNK BROTHERS**

White heat: The O'Jays circa 1965, with Bobby Massey top right




Leonard Chess and a deal was struck with Chess/GRT marketing and distributing Gamble and Huff's new label Neptune Records.

This seemed to be The O'Jays' chance. As Eddie Levert famously said, "When we met Kenny and Leon, we'd been on the brink of making it for so long we should have been called 'The Almosts'."

Ironically, signing with Neptune didn't stop The Almosts being an appropriate alternative moniker for the group. Featuring a delicious Huff electric piano groove and some fiery emoting from Levert, One Night Affair (No 15 R&B) almost broke through to big pop radio play while Branded Bad, again, almost landed pop play. As Gamble explained years later, "Unfortunately, Len [Chess] passed away three or four months after we made the deal with Chess. And then it seemed everything went haywire… They had to re-group Chess Records and GRT and we got pushed to the side."

The O'Jays battled on. The group's Bill Massey tried his hand at production, but the single Shattered Man on Saru Records flopped. Maybe the song-title described the state of Massey's mind because after a couple of unsuccessful shots back with HB Barnum's Little Star/Astroscope Records, Bill Massey left the group.

But then The O'Jays were invited back to Philadelphia. G&H had landed major label backing from Columbia and launched Philadelphia International.

**********

In the spring of 1972 Gamble and Huff took the song Back Stabbers – written by McFadden, Whitehead and Huff – into the familiar environment of Sigma Sound studio. And with owner/chief engineer Joe Tarsia behind the controls, G&H, with their MFSB session players, began work. With its delicious groove and telling lyrics warning about those who feign friendship with us while trying to entice away our boyfriends or girlfriends, Back Stabbers was an immediate pop and R&B hit.

The subsequent album went on to achieve platinum status. It was full of musical delights: When The World's At Peace had a hint of Sly Stone and Funkadelic in the distorted guitar riff while the soul ballad, Sunshine, featured Levert passionately ducking and swooping like a storefront preacher. But the undoubted piece de resistance of the album was the closer, Love Train.

Trains had, for decades, been used as a metaphor where cosmic locomotives drove through the darkness and pain of African-American consciousness. In 1872 the song Gospel Train had been published by The Fisk Jubilee Singers and 100 years later The Impressions' frontman, Curtis Mayfield, wrote People Get Ready, a soul-gospel classic about a train taking people to freedom and salvation.

Now Gamble, Huff and The O'Jays delivered Love Train. When the group started working on the song, it didn't have lyrics. Gamble, it is said, penned them in about five minutes. "People all over the world/Join hands/Start a love train," they went, followed by, "All of you brothers in Africa/Tell all the folks in Egypt, too/Please don't miss this train at the station/'cause if you miss it I feel sorry, sorry for you."

Photos: Getty

**Time to get down: Williams, Powell and Levert onstage around 1973**

## THIS POWERFUL DEPICTION OF SLAVE TRADE MISERY WAS TOO GOOD FOR A CASH-IN MOVIE

As it happened, Love Train entered the US Top 40 on 27 January 1973, the same day the Paris Peace Accord was signed. In more cynical times since, critics have dismissed Love Train as a simplistic slogan set to a catchy riff. But to millions of people through to today's age of rampaging terrorist gunmen, deranged despots and corrupt governments, it still carries a timeless reminder that only through love can humanity escape the tyranny of its own selfishness.

After the platinum-selling success of the *Back Stabbers* album Philadelphia International grew very quickly. It had to. Both Billy Paul and Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes landed breakthrough pop albums and the whole music industry was talking about this "new" sound in soul music, this Philly soul with its perfect marriage of sophisticated arrangements, songs memorable in melody and lyric and singers who, whether they brought to the vocal booth jazz roots like Billy Paul or churchy sounding roots like the Blue Notes' Teddy Pendergrass, had the chops to deliver a hit. While PIR kept the pot boiling with their other acts, they had enough back-catalogue resources – namely the tracks they'd recorded of The O'Jays during the Neptune Records Chess/GRT disappointment – to keep the legion of new O'Jays fans happy. *The O'Jays In Philadelphia* album made No 37 in the R&B chart and it gave the veterans time to enjoy the first fruits of international touring fame before beginning work on what was to become their all-time classic.

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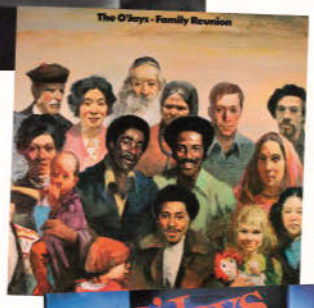
**licrophone fiends: he O'Jays in the studio with an engineer entre) in June 1968**

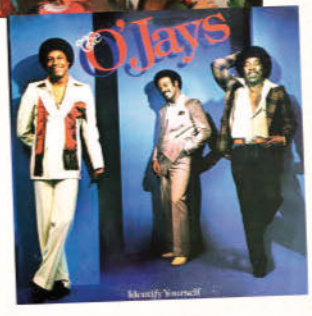
eventually the title track) of the authentic follow-up to Back Stabbers, a 9' 40" searing soundscape beginning with the sound of ocean waves and a clap of thunder, a two-note bassline and William Powell and Walter Williams chanting the song-title before Levert emotes the verse with broken sadness: "As far as your eyes can see/Men, women and baby slaves/Coming to the land of liberty/Where life's design is already made." It continues to build and build with Levert throwing in improvisations and even a quote from Old Man River as it offers an indelible condemnation of slave trade wickedness and America's guilt.

Gamble and Huff also had the songs and sounds to stop the *Ship Ahoy* album from becoming mired in a mood of reflective sadness. The opener, Put Your Hands Together, is a joyful, gospel-styled romp that did for the 70s what The Isley Brothers' Shout did for the 50s, offering gospel fervour and joy but with God himself never mentioned. The slow, moodily soulful Don't Call Me Brother lambasted ghetto culture for turning "brother" into a meaningless word hiding malignancy. Then there was dance music gem For The Love Of Money.

*Ship Ahoy* was a huge US hit (No 1 R&B, No 11 pop) and, by the time PIR brought its Philly soul entourage to Europe, pop fans were left in no doubt that, onstage as well as on record, The O'Jays were up there as one of the greatest vocal groups ever. In 1974 PIR released the trio's *Live In London*, recorded during two storming performances at the Hammersmith Odeon. It featured a breathtaking rendition of Sunshine with Eddie Levert emoting like a spirit-driven preacher.

In 1975 another outstanding O'Jays album arrived: *Survival*. In Britain's *Black Music* magazine, Alan Lewis [later the editor of *Record Collector*] wrote, "When it comes to anguished, wailing ballads, lead singer Eddie Levert has few equals, and he lets it all hang out on two Bunny Sigler songs, Let Me Make Love To You and What Am I Waiting For." But it was Kenny Gamble's fiery denouncement of rampant materialism, Rich Get Richer – with a rhythm that one and all reviewers were now referring to as 'disco' – which hit home the hardest.

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The Gamble/Huff/Martin/MFSB/O'Jays train continued to entice an international audience to get on board. Like *Survival*, the *Family Reunion* set (also 1975) went Platinum. Its attention-grabbing gatefold sleeve, featuring a painting by David Leffel, showed Eddie Levert, William Powell and Walter Williams surrounded by a diverse bunch of men, women and children of numerous ethnicities and cultures, making an important pictorial point about the human family and the need for us all to find unity. Kenny Gamble took the opportunity on the back sleeve to speak about the division that sadly exists in many families: "The generation gap is another evil plan," he wrote. "The result of which divided the family structure therefore creating a halt to the flow of wisdom from the wise to the young and stifling the energy of the youth which is the equaliser to wisdom and age."

The arranger of Unity, the opening track on the album, was Tony Bell, Thom Bell's younger brother, while it was MFSB's long-standing guitarist, Norman Harris, who arranged the disco delight, I Love Music. Another track on the album, Stairway To Heaven, lushly arranged by Bobby Martin, became a programming mainstay on America's Quiet Storm radio.

In 1975, ill health had forced William Powell to retire from The O'Jays' live performances, though he continued to record with the group until his death in April 1976. His replacement, Sammy Strain, came from doo wop-into-soul survivors Little Anthony & The Imperials. More hit albums followed for The O'Jays: *Message In Our Music* (1976) and *Travelin' At The Speed Of Thought* (1977).

But things were gradually proving more difficult for Philadelphia International to sustain their position as America's number one soul label. Ironically, it was the dance music sound that they and their MFSB sessioners had played a seminal part in creating – disco music – which threatened Philly soul's dominance. As disco, much originating from Europe and propelled by the *Saturday Night Fever* movie smash, gained more and more sales success, cracks began to appear in the PIR empire. This was exacerbated when the MFSB musicians were wooed away from Philadelphia International by another company to become The Salsoul Orchestra.

Yet for a while The O'Jays continued to score big, in 1978 releasing the last of their platinum-selling albums, *So Full Of Love*, Eddie Levert showing that it wasn't just Teddy Pendergrass who could deliver convincing declarations of romantic passion. But funk, electronic dance and, particularly, hip-hop were breaking through big in the R&B/soul/pop crossover. The O'Jays' star began to wane, albums like 1979's *Identify Yourself*, 1980's *The Year 2000*, 1982's *My Favourite Person* and

**Artists of note: celebrating the success of For The Love Of Money in a 1974 publicity shot**

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY. Popular Philadelphia International recording artists, The O'Jays, who currently have the number one record in the nation with the "gold" certified single "For The Love Of Money," are shown with some of that "Mean Green." From left to right they are: Eddie Levert, William Powell and Walter Williams.

Photos: Getty

"People all over the world, join hands": riding high in 1975

## GAMBLE AND HUFF HAD THE SONGS TO STOP *SHIP AHOY* FROM BEING MIRED IN A REFLECTIVE MOOD

1984's *Love And More* each selling more poorly with the latter release not making the pop chart at all. Still, 1985's *Love Fever* showed that funk and rap elements could be introduced to the group's sound and that the veterans were capable of circumnavigating changes in public taste. And two years later The O'Jays were unexpectedly at the top of the soul/R&B charts again with Lovin' You, one commentator dubbing The O'Jays "one of soul music's most durable groups".

Sadly, time dictated an inevitable decline in the Canton harmonisers' amazing success story. They switched labels and though, with the exception of a Christmas album, the five albums they recorded with EMI all made the US album charts, the days of platinum sales were at an end.

There were still some highlights for the group, however. Eddie's son, Gerald Levert, both as a member of the hot soul group Levert and as a solo artist, kept the family name alive and, in 1995, Gerald recorded an album of duets with his dad called, appropriately enough, *Father And Son*. In 2003, there was an unexpected celluloid treat for the legion of O'Jays fans when the group had a delightful guest spot in the musical comedy, *The Fighting Temptations*, with Walter Williams singing lead on a deft rendition of Paul Simon's Loves Me Like A Rock. In 1997 The O'Jays' *Love You To Tears* album was released by Volcano, widely regarded as the best O'Jays album since their Philadelphia International classics. In 2016, Eddie made the world's media when he threatened legal action to stop Donald Trump using Love Train as a signature tune to his electoral campaign. In 2019, the group's good-in-parts *The Final Word* was released. That year The O'Jays were inducted into the Philadelphia Music Walk of Fame...

Awards and accolades continue to come The O'Jays' way. And their rich seam of music continues to be danced to in nightclubs and Northern soul pub discos and romanced to in luxury apartments and black mould-ridden housing estates. The love train is still picking up passengers. RC

***A Super Audio CD set of* Ship Ahoy/Message In Our Music/Live In London *is on Vocalion.***

## AT PEACE THE O'JAYS ON RECORD

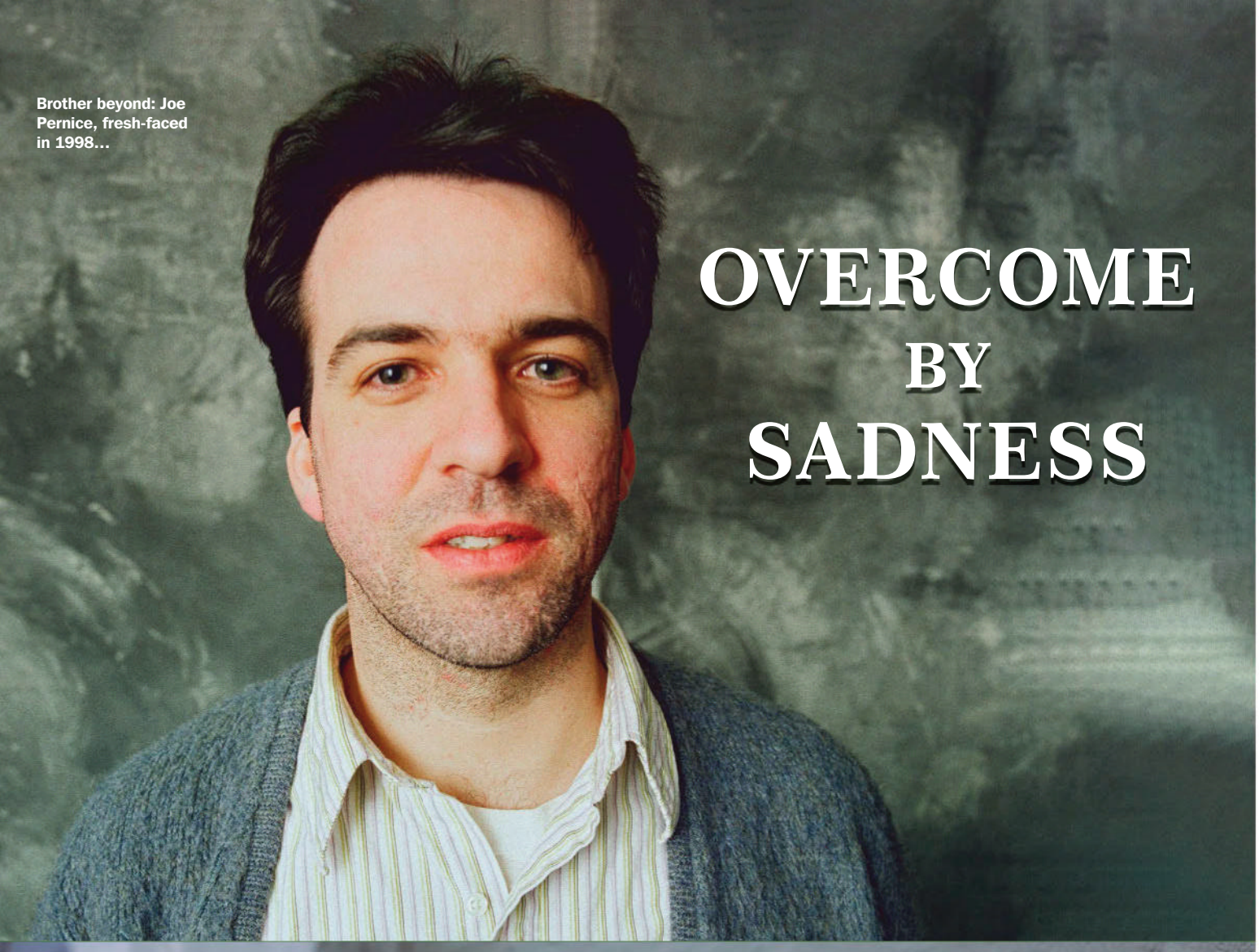
**The Mascots (Do The) Wiggle** (King 45-5377, US, 1960) **£20**
It's ironic that Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* TV showcase, which was to foist on US teenagers dozens of banal dance records, was broadcast from Philadelphia. Before The Mascots became The O'Jays, and long before they became the masters of Philly soul, they made this puerile effort. Fortunately, it wasn't to make *American Bandstand*.

**The O'Jays I'll Never Forget You** (Imperial 66162, US, 1966) **£300**
Such is the perfect fit between Eddie Levert's gospel exhorting and Motown-sounding or Philly soul accompaniments that the majority of The O'Jays' unsuccessful singles got some plays on the Northern soul scene. This Detroit-recorded song is their rarest, and consequently their most expensive.

**The O'Jays I'll Be Sweeter Tomorrow (Than I Was Today)** (Bell 691, US, 1967) **£20**
The fine New York production team of George Kerr and Richard Tee could well have given The O'Jays the breakthrough pop hit they were seeking, though it wasn't to be. However, with one side a sweet and soulful US R&B hit and the flip, I Dig Your Act, a Northern soul floorfiller, this remains a gem.

**The O'Jays Looky Looky (Look At Me Girl)** (Neptune N 31, US, 1970) **£10**
Here it was, the Philly soul sound fully formed back in 1970 – Gamble and Huff guiding Levert and co in a catchy plea to get the girl's attention, MFSB delivering the groove and arranger Thom Bell deftly providing the strings and horns arrangement. If GRT hadn't dropped the marketing/distribution ball it could have been a pop Top Tenner.

**The O'Jays For The Love Of Money** (Philadelphia International ZS 73544, US, 1974) **£10**
Such was the appeal of bass player Anthony Jackson's riff on this Philly dance classic that he was eulogised in *Bass Player* magazine and, with Gamble and Huff, given a share of the composer credits. Kenny G's timeless denouncement of mammon fixation makes this a dancefloor delight with a telling message.



Brother beyond: Joe Pernice, fresh-faced in 1998…

# OVERCOME BY SADNESS

"Look at me! I've lived!" declares **Joe Pernice**. Few contemporary American songwriters can do weathered ennui like him, albeit with a nod and a wink. The Pernice Brother talks **Rob Hughes** through nearly three decades of studio output, album by gorgeously sorrowful album.

… and the flaming wreck today: "I'm not 25 anymore"

**Joe Pernice's earliest ever memory is music related. "We were visiting my grandmother in East Boston on my birthday," recalls the singer-songwriter, Zooming *RC* from his adopted home in Toronto. "I must have been three years old. I had one of those Big Wheel tricycles as a present and I was riding up and down her hallway. Jimmy Webb's Galveston came on the radio, and it stopped me. Something from that song just fucking went into my head like a spike. I didn't even hear the words, it was purely sonic – the chord changes, the melodies, the instrumentation. It was very powerful to me."**

In many ways, 56-year-old Pernice has spent his creative life in the slipstream of that moment, trying to evoke in others the same intensity of feeling that Jimmy Webb induced in his toddler self. He spent his teens listening to the likes of New Order, The Smiths and R.E.M., but the songwriters he looked up to – Webb, Carole King, Harry Nilsson, Brian Wilson – were all pop classicists at heart. Filtered through his own worldview, their influence has been brought to bear on various projects over the past 30-odd years, from the all-acoustic Scud Mountain Boys and the Pernice Brothers to solo outings and indie supergroup, The New Mendicants.

Themes of sorrow and loss, twinned to luminous melodies and arrangements, provide the through line of Pernice's body of work. Indeed, so acute is his gift for a melancholic tune that one early composition was voted The Most Exquisitely Sad Song In The Whole World.

"Have you seen the John le Carré documentary, *The Pigeon Tunnel*?" he asks by way of explanation. "He says how he writes from a bit of reality, but then goes somewhere else with it. And I feel like I've done that all along. Maybe it's a way of coping with things. Songwriting is a very important and necessary part of the machine that keeps me going. It helps me function in the world."

The latest manifestation of this is *Who Will You Believe*, the first Pernice Brothers album for five years. Sad, beautiful, warm and eloquent, it carries all the qualities we've come to expect from Pernice, only with a more pressing sense of his own mortality.

"I'm writing more now than I can remember," he says, settling in to guide *RC* through his most significant releases. "Songs are just falling out of me and I'm not sure why. I just feel much more connected to the music. Y'know, that's a charmed life."

## Scud Mountain Boys *Pine Box* (Chunk CH 1009, LP, US, 1995) £30

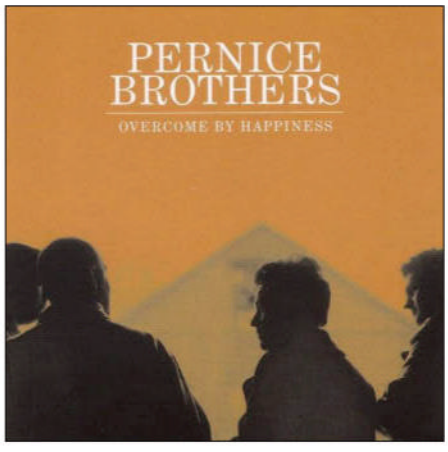
**Recorded around one microphone in guitarist Bruce Tull's kitchen, the Scuds' debut is a downhome treat, featuring Pernice originals and a light sprinkling of covers. Silver Jews' David Berman handles sleevenotes.**

"We started as a four-piece rock band doing songs that I personally wasn't so attached to, even though they were mine. I'd leave with a headache after every show. Then we'd go back to Bruce's house, have some booze, sit around in his kitchen and just start playing this *other* music: unplugged, acoustic, with a kind of AM 70s/country feel. There was no expectation, it was just really fun. Stephen [Desaulniers, bassist] has a great voice and we found we could really sing together, playing songs that were more melodic. And *Pine Box* just grew from that. At heart, I think Bruce always wanted to be a pedal steel player, so he created a lot of ambient swells and texture with just a Telecaster and a volume pedal. I started writing songs and hit a stride. I remember one of the first ones we did was Reservoir. It was like I was bottled up and waiting to find a conduit for this stuff. I was writing two or three songs a day sometimes."

## Scud Mountain Boys *Massachusetts* (Sub Pop SP 342, LP, US, 1996) £25

**Pernice's bittersweet songwriting hits an early peak on the Scuds' third effort, as evinced by In A Ditch, Grudge Fuck and the title track. But he's already feeling the urge to move on.**

"The Scud Mountain Boys' sound is not super dynamic; we were kind of stuck as a quiet band that had this thing. I started writing all sorts of songs and it just wasn't the right venue for all of them. On *Massachusetts*, we had maybe two songs with a piano. Outside of that, I don't think we had much of any instrumentation. Stephen plays a four-note run on the title track and then Grudge Fuck is also piano-based, which kind of pointed to the future to me. When I heard that go down, I thought, 'I want to do more of this!' So, I just felt like I had to do a different thing, musically. I think I would've been bummed out otherwise, and I probably would've stopped. For instance, I would've been unhappy had we done something like Crestfallen as a country tune with pedal steel swells instead of orchestration. So, when we started making *Overcome By Happiness*, it made me realise it could be done."




## Pernice Brothers *Overcome By Happiness* (Sub Pop SPCD 427, CD, US, 1998) £5

**Coloured with brass and strings, Pernice expands into lush, semi-symphonic pop, with the gorgeous Crestfallen as the crowning moment. Includes Chicken Wire, later voted Most Exquisitely Sad Song In The Whole World by AOL Music.**

"Writing the songs, I was hearing a lot of piano, a lot of orchestration. I was listening to Carole King and Harry Nilsson – classic songwriters – and I remember thinking, 'God, those songs are so amazing. They're not crammed, they're just spacious and beautiful and everything is pulling its weight.' I wanted to make a record that could hopefully aspire to do those things to people, even if I was an indie songwriter at heart. I had this big old car with an eight-track player, and [bassist/co-producer] Thom Monahan and I drove through the country listening to a crappy cassette of demos, talking about how we'd make the record. That was our pre-production. And the studio sessions were really fun. It was so exciting. I swear to God, hearing the strings go down on a song like Overcome By Happiness – which I think was the first song we did – I just couldn't believe it. I was like, '*This* was the right thing to do.' That was also the end of an era for me, in a way, because I moved on to starting my own label."

## Joe Pernice *Big Tobacco* (OLI TPLP 659CD, UK, CD, 2000) £5

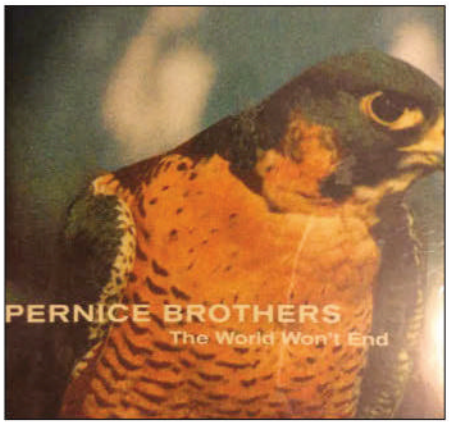
**After 1999's mob-handed side project *Chappaquiddick Skyline*, Pernice and various chums hole up in New England to toast his first solo album proper. Wry, doleful standouts: Bum Leg, Prince Valium, Undertow.**

"I started getting into this zone towards the end of touring *Overcome By Happiness* where I didn't think the music was being represented in the way I wanted. We had to do it as a rock record, basically, because I couldn't afford strings. And that wasn't fun after a while. In the meantime, I had lots of songs and wanted to keep moving,

Photos: Dennis Kleiman; Colleen Nicholson

**Funny-sad: "I wanted to answer to nobody" – Pernice Brothers in 1998, Joe second left**

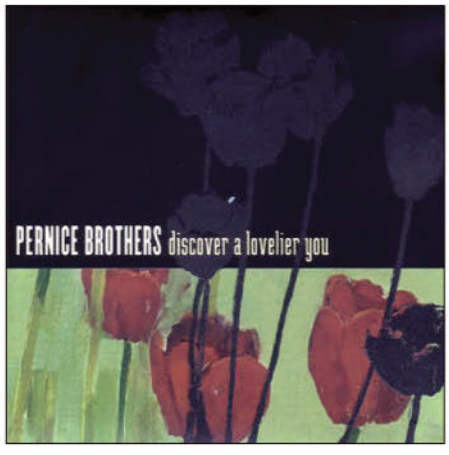
and I was playing with different people. We recorded *Big Tobacco* in the house that Thom Monahan and I were living in. I didn't have any plans to tour it, I just wanted to put it out. *Chappaquiddick Skyline* was the same, which is partially why it was kind of buried and given a different name. That was another record that was so fun to make because there was zero expectation. I remember getting Everyone Else Is Evolving and Theme To An Endless Bummer down and thinking, 'I don't ever have to play these live.' And that was really liberating."




**Pernice Brothers *The World Won't End*** ([PIAS]/Southpaw PAWCD 5, CD, UK, 2001) **£4**

**Loss, longing and regret come packaged in exquisite pop arrangements, the six-piece and guests unveiling enduring classics like 7:30, Our Time Has Passed and the sumptuous, string-borne Let That Show.**

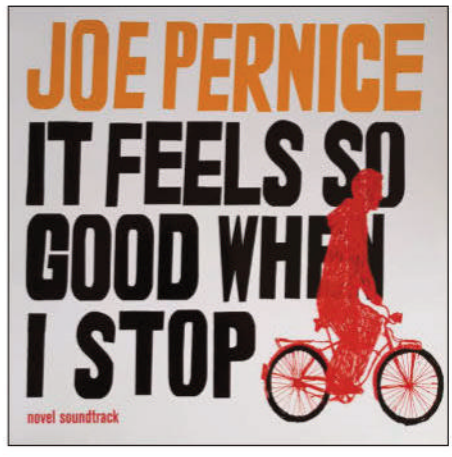
"Holy smokes, this was a blast, because we were making a record that we planned to play live. And we knew we could pull it off. I remember writing Our Time Has Passed on the telephone, sitting in my kitchen, while I was on hold with a health insurance company. Suddenly I came up with that riff. At first, I thought it sounded too much like the song Overcome By Happiness, so I switched it around a little and the song just happened. It also harks back to the Stones, because I was listening a lot to *Exile On Main St* at the time. *The World Won't End* was the first real album I did on my own label. I'm not going to disparage my old label, because I really liked being on Sub Pop, but when someone's giving you a lot of money to make a record, they get more involved in what happens. Somebody actually said to me, 'Hey, why don't you guys wear suits when you play?' And I was like, 'Yeah, that's not my thing.' I wanted to go my own way and answer to nobody."




**Pernice Brothers *Discover A Lovelier You*** (OLI/Ashmont TPLP 439CD, CD, UK 2005) **£5**

**Pernice follows 2003's *Yours, Mine & Ours* (featuring the crushingly pretty Baby In Two and Blinded By The Stars) with this more guitar-centric LP. The baleful ballads are among his very finest (Saddest Quo, Pisshole In The Snow, Red Desert), while Dumb It Down detours into joyous pop.**

"Those three or four records right then were so much fun to make. It was like the inmates were running the prison for a while. Musically, I was going through a thing where you start to not want to hear orchestration. You want to do other things. And at that point I'd got married and we were moving to Canada. But I was still living in New York for some of it, travelling back and forth to Canada because I wasn't a resident yet. It was a weird record to make because it was a very transitional time for me. And Thom Monahan was relocating to Los Angeles from New York. James Walbourne came over from England to record guitar on some of it. So *Discover A Lovelier You* is a blurry record to me. I made it kind of hastily, but there's some great stuff on there."

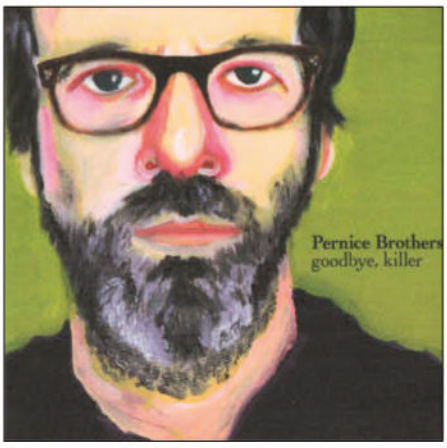



**Joe Pernice *It Feels So Good When I Stop*** (OLI/Ashmont TPLP 1041, LP, UK 2009) **£10**

**The soundtrack to Pernice's irreverent debut novel of the same name (published by Riverhead the same year) is an intriguing set, consisting mostly of covers, with material tackled ranging from Plush, Dream Syndicate and Sebadoh to Del Shannon, Tom T. Hall and Todd Rundgren.**

"I'd written that Smiths book for the 33 And A Third series [*Meat Is Murder*, 2003] and an editor at Penguin got in touch and said, 'Hey, I read your book. Do you have another novel because we'd be interested in publishing it?' I didn't have one written, but I definitely had one that was floating around in my head. So, I got to work and shut everything off for six or eight months. I didn't write a single song during that time and barely played music, either. It was a full-time mental take-up to stay in character. I started *thinking* like people in the book. I didn't plan to make an album, but I knew that music would play a part in the novel somehow, using songs as touchstones. Then I was taking a shower one day and just

had an idea: 'Why don't I cover the songs from the book and make a companion thing? That'll be fun.'"




**Pernice Brothers *Goodbye, Killer*** (OLI/Ashmont TPLP1073CD, CD, UK 2010) **£5**

**Four years after *Live A Little*, the Pernice Brothers return in some style with a more pared-back affair. Improbably, AC/DC serve as major inspiration.**

"Musically, I just decided to go for it. I got Ric Menck to play drums. I told him: 'Menck, I don't want any cymbals.' If you notice, there are no cymbals on this record, only really a hi-hat. I just wanted more space in the songs. Ric's got a very distinctive voice and used to call me 'Original Pernice', while my brother Bob was 'Other Pernice'. He's like, 'Original, the older I get, I want to hit fewer drums fewer times.' So, it's very spare playing. I remember mentioning Mutt Lange's stuff with AC/DC on *Back In Black*. Is there a fill on that whole album? I was like, "We should shoot for that." We did it at our record label in Massachusetts and it was really chilled out. At that time, more than ever, I felt that I had very little to do with the music industry. I could've been selling tyres or something instead of music because I was so out of the loop. And happily so.

**Scud Mountain Boys *Do You Love The Sun*** (OLI/Ashmont TPLP 1210, LP, UK, 2013) **£10**

**Grievances swept aside, Pernice corrals the old gang 16 years after disbanding. Includes the lovely The Mendicant, pointing the way to his next project.**

"I'd always felt bad about the way the Scuds ended. Those guys were really my closest friends at the time, and it was not an easy thing to leave. They were really bummed out and I didn't speak to Bruce or Stephen for 14 years. Eventually, I reached out to [drummer] Tom Shea. Then I wrote Stephen a note, telling him I was playing a show with Tom and I'd love it if he played, too. And he showed up. Before the set, we had a drink and shot the shit. I think it probably took us five minutes to clear the air. And then it was like we'd never stopped. Even though I've always wanted to explore other music than the Scud Mountain Boys, I still liked making that kind of stuff. So, I wrote some songs and Steve wrote a few. Then we went up to a studio in New Hampshire, out in the woods. We didn't know if we could still make a record, but it turned out so well. It was a great time."

**The New Mendicants *Into The Lime*** (XPT XPT 001, LP, clear vinyl, US, 2014) **£35**

**Teenage Fanclub's Norman Blake and Sadies/Neko Case drummer Mike Belitsky join Pernice for an indie-rock love-in, topped by a great cover of Sandy Danny's By The Time It Gets Dark.**

The first time I met Norman was when we played with the Fanclub in 2000. He's like, 'Joe, I love that song Crestfallen.' I went, 'Well, you should, because I fuckin' stole the coda from The Concept!' Norman's one of my heroes, a wonderful guy. And he's a great friend of mine now. He ended up living not too far from me, so he came to my house here in Toronto one day, with his guitar. I was like, 'Hey, I've got this song,' and he started playing on it. By the time he left, we had plans to make a record together. I also brought in Mike, who played drums with me for a long time. Norman had a studio at his house in Kitchener, about an hour away, so Mike and I started driving out there and recording with him. We were both talking about Sandy Denny at one point, then Norman pulled that song out. Playing with him is just something else.

**Pernice Brothers *Spread The Feeling*** (Ashmont ASHM 018, LP, red vinyl, US, 2019) **£20**

**Pernice revives his main band for the first time in nearly a decade. Perfectly weathered guitar-pop ensues, with Neko Case and Pete Yorn among the contributors.**

"I made a few other records in between this and *Goodbye, Killer*. I just hadn't really been feeling like writing Pernice Brothers songs, I was feeling more unplugged. I'd actually recorded a handful of these songs a good number of years earlier, because around 2011 we made an entire Pernice Brothers album that I scrapped. I just wasn't feeling it at the time. Thom Monahan has a good expression that I've taken since we first recorded together in 1995: 'Not every kid makes the team.' So, I threw away probably seven or eight songs, but kept Throw Me To The Lions, Skinny Jeanne and The Devil And The Jinn, which Neko Case sings on. Then around 2018 I started doing some recording with my friend, Liam Jaeger, who has a studio up here, and we wrote more electric stuff. We ended up finishing the existing three, then all the other songs came right there and then.

**Pernice Brothers *Who Will You Believe*** (New West NW 5808LPRT, LP, turquoise, with flexi, UK, 2024) **£30**

**Longtime bandmates and returning guest Neko Case are at hand for Pernice's latest autumnal gem, featuring strings, horns and a local Toronto choir. Themes of mortality abound after the 2019 deaths of good friends David Berman (Silver Jews) and Gary Stewart (Rhino Records), plus Pernice's cousin and studio owner, Joe Harvard.**

The songs, including the Lambchop-sign-to-Hi-Records slow soul strut of December In Her Eyes, are partly informed by loss ['*Look at me! I've lived!*'*he declares to* RC *when we remark on his deeper, huskier, more cracked and croaky vocals on the new LP*]. In fact, all my records are: 2019 was a tough year, to say the least. It was a while before I felt I could write again, and The Purple Rain has a mournful quality to it. That song is an elegy to some remarkable people. I wrote A Song For Sir Robert Helpmann because he played the Child Catcher in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. My friends and I talk about that guy to this day. He still freaks me out. I've known Neko Case for a long time, so I wrote a country duet and asked her to be on it. She does an amazing job on I Don't Need That Anymore. Look Alive may be the perkiest song about death that I've ever written, because it's also about living in the present. Like the title track, it's about making everything count. I'm not 25 anymore, so you start thinking about stuff. I've raised a kid who's now an adult. And if you've been there, it just blows your mind. The changes that happen to you are so gradual that you don't always notice how different your life has become. That kind of thing can happen to a guy.

**Who Will You Believe *is on New West.***

Photo: Dennis Kleiman

# CAUGHT BY THE BUZZ!

**Every generation gets the music epoch it deserves – whether that's psychedelia, glam, punk, new pop, Madchester… In the 90s it was the turn of Britpop. For a period, there was a range of activity under that banner, most notably from the colossally popular likes of Oasis, Blur, Pulp, Supergrass and Elastica, but also from the lesser-known likes of Marion, Menswe@r and My Life Story… Over the next 12 pages we reacquaint ourselves with some of Britpop's stars, Joel McIver looks at Britrock and Joe Muggs at Brit-dance to affirm the era's rampant eclecticism, Wesley Doyle recalls life in a band on the scene and meets the next generation of Britpoppers, we reassess the era's best albums and the "runners-up", consider the notable singles, remember the Blur-Oasis rivalry, David Stubbs offers an Alternate View Of Britpop, and John Coleman compiles a hefty Oasis discography.**

**While it's hard to define exactly what Britpop was, or when it started and ended, you can't deny the 90s was a thrilling time for British music.**

It was certainly a successful time for the guitar bands most closely associated with the term. But it was also a period when all kinds of artists who might have otherwise been cult successes suddenly found themselves in the mainstream, swept along in the general excitement. There was a seeming rush of great singles and albums released every week, the boom time for £15 CDs enabling the music industry to take chances on new acts to sign with all those sales.

When Oasis headlined Knebworth in 1996, the support bill included The Prodigy, Manic Street Preachers, The Chemical Brothers and Dreadzone. Immediately below Pulp on the Pyramid Stage when they headlined Glastonbury in 1995 were Orbital, Jamiroquai and PJ Harvey. None are names typically associated with Britpop, yet all flourished in its wake.

When *Select* magazine published its era-defining cover of Suede's Brett Anderson wrapped in a Union Jack in April 1993, the first wave of Britpop was already established: The Auteurs, Saint Etienne, Pulp and Denim were namechecked below a headline declaring: "Yanks go home!" If such a provocative statement sounds a bit strong 31 years on, certainly there was a reaction fomenting against the earnestness of American grunge. This first wave of Britpop provided an arty antidote to Pearl Jam et al: certainly, Suede and co were more glam than the Fred Perry, Kangol and Ellesse-clad hordes of the genre's commercial peak, a more streamlined guitar-pop style minted by Oasis.

That Oasis were signed by Creation's Alan McGee after seeing them support Eighteen Wheeler at Glasgow King Tut's in May 1993 is testament to how Britpop signalled not just lucrative royalties but also a vibrant A&R scene, a small venue network thriving before social media algorithms had any impact on who to sign.

It'd be foolish to ignore the problematic aspects of Britpop: systemic misogyny, homophobia and racism, not least in the music press, not to mention a blizzard of bad drugs. There was, too, widespread enmity between artists typified by Blur v Oasis. Not for nothing were two of the best Britpop albums reflections on fame and its comedown: Pulp's *This Is Hardcore* and Blur's self-titled fifth album.

**IT'D BE ABSURD NOT TO CELEBRATE THE THRILL OF IT ALL**

Yet it'd be absurd not to celebrate the thrill of it all, the fine music Britain was producing, made by artists who wouldn't normally have got a look in – not just because of their rampant eclecticism, but due to their backgrounds: Oasis weren't the only working-class band from outside London to take up residency in the charts in the 90s

Whether you're into angular art-pop, swaggering rock'n'roll or melancholy balladry, there's a Britpop record for you. It was a great period for physical product: albums, singles and classic B-sides. Over the next 14 pages, join us as we remember Britpop at its best.

Photos: Getty

# olympians

## The toppermost of the Britpoppermost

**Oasis *Definitely Maybe*** (Creation CRELP169, 2LP, UK, 1994) **£160**
Considering Oasis were one of the great B-sides bands, with flips like Half The World Away and Acquiesce established indie classics, it should be little surprise that most people aged 40-60 can probably still sing virtually every song on *Definitely Maybe*.

Noel Gallagher possessed the music equivalent of magical Billy's Boots circa the writing of Oasis' first two albums. Even their debut's one filler, the rinky-dink doggerel of Digsy's Dinner, is memorable.

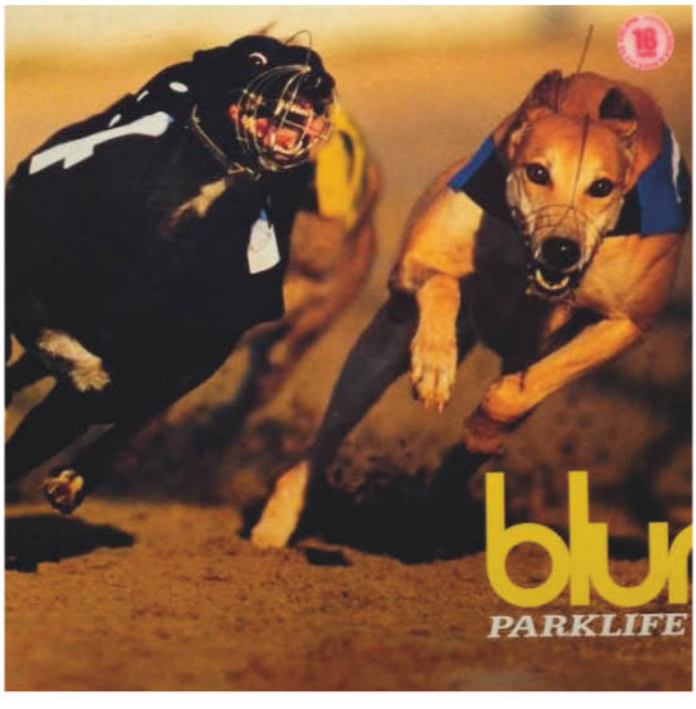
There was a toughness to Gallagher's guitar playing on *Definitely Maybe,* too, with the wallop and economy of Sex Pistols' Steve Jones, the glamorous colour of Mick Ronson and, on Slide Away, some of the shoegaze haze of Kevin Shields. Capable singer as he was, though, he needed his kid brother's raw, affecting voice to embody his songs' fantasies.

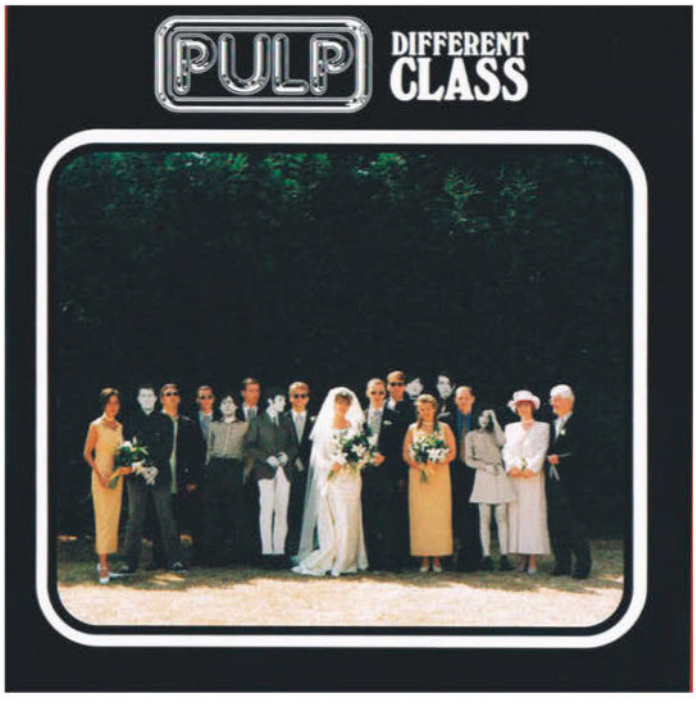
As apolitical as it gets, Oasis stood for hope and escape. Rock 'N' Roll Star and Cigarettes And Alcohol made their determination to chase bigger dreams explicit, but every note of *Definitely Maybe* demands something better from life. And no one was better at making those demands than Liam Gallagher, who did little in terms of performance but conveyed a *lot*.

Liam made being a rock star look easy, doing little onstage but looking magnificent, and his singing was far more adaptable than he's given credit for. Sure, his snarl was as confrontational as John Lydon's on Bring It On Down, yet the chorus of Live Forever showcases one of pop's most beautiful falsettos this side of Roy Orbison.

And let's be clear, Oasis *were* pop. Dismissed by some as a Beatles rip-off merchant, actually Noel Gallagher's most Lennon & McCartney-esque move was to write mass-appeal big songs. Noel wound some up by freely pointing out which bits of T.Rex, The Jam and Stevie Wonder he was borrowing from at any given moment, but the end results didn't and still don't sound quite like anyone else. Instantly welcoming, yes – "moments in the sky we can all share," as *RC*'s David Stubbs once wrote.

Creatively, Oasis probably always had a built-in obsolescence. After Knebworth, the Gallaghers had nothing left to escape, apart from each other. But for *Definitely Maybe*, *(What's The Story) Morning Glory* and all those magnificent B-sides they casually threw out at the time, they were unavoidable and undeniable. Oasis wanted more, in the process showing a generation of working-class kids how to do it, too. They *had* to happen, and songs as big as *Definitely Maybe* were never going to settle for cult status. ***John Earls***



**Blur *Parklife*** (Food FOODLP10, LP, UK, 1994) **£150**
After their patchy, baggy-indebted debut, *Leisure* (1991), Blur sounded the retro alarm on 1993's *Modern Life Is Rubbish*. As the title suggested, Blur found an antidote to contemporary stasis in Britain's 60s pop heritage, merging wistful psychedelia with punkier thrills.

A year later, third album *Parklife* was the perfect culmination of Blur's influences. Alongside thrashy favourites like Tracy Jacks and Jubilee were more audacious experiments from a band seeking to become enormous by doing things their way. Thirty years on, it still surprises with its unpredictable jolts of style and mood. In some truly inspired album sequencing, the drunken waltz of The Debt Collector, Badhead's dreamy picnic and the ferocious Bank Holiday are thrown together seemingly at random – yet these 16 tracks also belong exactly where they are, when listened to from start to finish.

Damon Albarn remains one of pop's great polymaths, but he's never quite created anything this imperious since. At his best, he offers pop music we didn't know we wanted. It helps that Dave Rowntree fires off superb staccato drum assaults, Graham Coxon proves himself as agile a guitarist as any from his generation, while Alex James' basslines on Girls And Boys and London Loves instantly demolish claims that he's only ever been an indolent stilton-addled chancer.

The Kinks were the standard comparison for Blur at the time, and *Parklife* is what would have happened if *The Village Green Preservation Society* had sold shedloads instead of failing to chart. Even people as creatively restless as Albarn and Coxon need to remember what it was like when their inventiveness chimed so completely with the public. No wonder Blur tried doing it all over again a year later on *The Great Escape*. But they'd already nailed it here. Talk about third time lucky: *Parklife* still sounds like one of the best albums of its era, and indeed of the decade whence it sprang. ***John Earls***

**Pulp *Different Class*** (Island ILPS 8041, LP, UK, 1995) **£300**
If Pulp's first major label release, 1994's *His'N'Hers*, blueprinted a worldview full of suburban sleaze, foiled romance and skint, knock-kneed longing, framed within fast-improving lo-fi glam pop smarts, its follow-up saw these perennial outsiders confidently vaulting the fence into the musical and cultural mainstream.

Jarvis Cocker personified the idea of Britpop as a revenge of the nerds, a mission immediately expressed when *Different Class* opener Mis-Shapes refers to a hostile straight world where you get "a smack in the mouth just for standing out". When it promises to prevail because "we'll use the one thing we've got more of – that's our minds" it reflects a key facet of the album's tribal conflict theme, which we find threaded through other tracks, sometimes much more darkly. I Spy, for

# shut up and britdance

## Britpop was a golden era for electronica.

**By Joe Muggs**

During the years that young Brits were irrevocably altering the place of guitar music in the culture, the UK's electronic music scene was in a period of mindblowing flux. The white-hot explosions of acid house and rave were always hugely varied, but by 1993 the centre couldn't hold and the various subsets of hard house, happy house, prog, trance, jungle and so on were fragmenting and creating their own subcultures.

Around 1994, arena dance artists were finding their feet and settling in for the long haul in the good old fashioned album-and-tour model. In short order, albums like **Orbital**'s self-titled "brown album", **The Prodigy**'s ***Music For The Jilted Generation***, **Underworld**'s ***Dubnobasswithmyheadman***, **Leftfield**'s ***Leftism*** and **The Chemical Brothers**' ***Exit Planet Dust*** emerged and made their way into the mainstream critical canon.

Elsewhere, beats were accelerating and bass deepening as jungle emerged, had a brief moment as *the* sound of UK cities, then morphed into drum'n'bass. **Goldie**'s ***Timeless*** still stands tall over that landscape, but other enduring classic albums include the intensely quirky **A Guy Called Gerald**'s ***Black Secret Technology,*** **LTJ Bukem's** soulful ***Earth*** compilation series and the cosmic vistas of **4Hero**'s ***Parallel Universe***. The purist jungle sound is best captured by the dubwise Bristolians **More Rockers**' ***Dubplate Selection Vol. 1***, and the furious raggamuffin energy of **Shy FX**'s ***Just An Example***.

**A CREATIVE ZONE LAY IN BETWEEN THE DANCEFLOOR AND THE CHILLOUT ROOM**

One of the most creative zones lay in between the dancefloor and the chillout room, where minds and creative vistas were expanding. **Aphex Twin** was on a roll, with ***Selected Ambient Works Vol II***, ***I Care Because You Do*** and ***Surfing On Sine Waves*** (under his **Polygon Window** guise) all released between 1993 and '95. **Autechre**'s ***Amber*** and ***Tri Repetae***, **Future Sound Of London**'s ***Lifeforms*** and ***ISDN***, Global Communication's ***76:14*** and ***Pentamerous Metamorphosis*** (the latter originally a set of remixes of shoegazers Chapterhouse) and **Ultramarine**'s ***United Kingdoms*** likewise all put a flag in the ground for post-rave experimentation as futurist head music.

This was also, of course, the period when trip-hop boomed: the thrilling claustrophobia of **Tricky**'s ***Maxinquaye***, the devastating melancholy of **Portishead**'s ***Dummy***, **Massive Attack** proving their staying power with the sophistication of ***Protection*** and the breezier soulfulness of **Nightmares On Wax**'s ***Smoker's Delight*** all gathered UK hip-hop, street soul and dub together into a distinctive downtempo groove.

More aggro hip-hop still cut through, though, in idiosyncratic forms: the metal-tinged hardcore of **Gunshot**'s ***Patriot Games***, the furious radical politics of **Fun Da Mental**'s ***Seize The Time***, and the movie-sampling instrumentals of **Depth Charge**'s ***Nine Deadly Venoms***.

There were uncategorisable acts in the cracks between indie and electronica, too. Floating through the ether and providing a wonderfully weird edge to the Britpop era, were the heartbreaking rave comedown country-dub torch songs of **One Dove**'s ***Morning Dove White***, and the arch krautrock buzz of **Stereolab**'s early imperial phase: ***Transient Random-Noise Bursts With Announcements*** and ***Mars Audiac Quintet***.

Finally, possibly dance's closest cousin to Britpop was Big Beat. It blasted out of the south coast, taking the fierce drum loops of the Chemical Brothers and liberally dousing them in strong disco lager. Spearheaded by **Norman Cook (Fat Boy Slim)** and the Skint label, his club, the Big Beat Boutique, held in Brighton from 1995 – and his biggest album ***You've Come A Long Way, Baby*** – blared out of every student union for at least the next five years.

instance, presents a revenge fantasy in which our humble hero vows to "blow your paradise away" – principally, it seems, by having it away with posh women – while also hinting that he's too much of a slacker to actually make it happen. "It may look to the untrained eye/I'm sitting on my ass all day," he says. "I'm biding time until I take you all on."

It's one of several examples here of the band squinting to focus on the state of the nation surrounding them, and nowhere did they do that more incisively than on the peerless Common People. While it was acutely perceptive, it was also political with a potency no contemporaries bar the Manic Street Preachers could match. It also seemed particularly pertinent to some of the class tourists they were sharing the pages of the music press with.

*Different Class* is of its time, but it also endures because much of the world they describe is still there. It's also built on an aesthetic tapestry that still sounds fresh: classic guitar pop laced with synth-pop shimmer, a vocal style and camp rhythmic stomp betraying the outré elan of glam, allied to a talent for channelling a certain 70s brand of melodramatic Europop, as if unearthed in one of the charity shops where Pulp appeared to pick up most of their clothes.

Sure, irony is at work here, but this is music full of heart – witness the sweet, string-swept fatalism of Something Changed, or the subtext beneath the nostalgia of Live Bed Show, Disco 2000 and Sorted For E's And Whizz, forming another key theme: the party will be over sooner than you know, so enjoy it while it lasts, kids. ***Johnny Sharp***

**Elastica *Elastica*** (Deceptive Records BLUFF 014LP, LP + booklet and flexi, UK, 1995) **£75**

While the tangled love lives of the architects of Britpop made for good copy, it somewhat reduced the role of Justine Frischmann – possibly the most influential person in the triumvirate – to that of merely 'the girlfriend'. Yet many of the attributes – both musical and sartorial – that became associated with Suede and Blur, originally came from her, and are writ large on Elastica's self-titled debut.

Frischmann and drummer Justin Welch had been working together since the former left Suede, with Albarn depping on bass. But when permanent bassist Annie Holland and guitarist Donna Matthews joined, Elastica were born, and they were soon signed to former *NME* writer and Radio 1 DJ Steve Lamacq's Deceptive Records. Their first single, Stutter, was released in October 1983 to great acclaim, and the following year's Line Up and Connection both went Top 20. But with Blur one of the biggest bands in the country, Frischmann's and Albarn's relationship came under scrutiny from the tabloids, something neither were prepared for.

When Elastica's debut album was released in March 1995, it went straight to No 1 in the UK becoming – like Suede's and Oasis's before them – the fastest-selling debut album ever (although Elastica held the record for slightly longer than their peers, not being usurped until Arctic Monkeys' *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not*, over a decade later).

The album is a masterclass in economy: coming in at under 40 mins, 11 of the 15 songs don't even make the three-minute mark. Taking cues – as well as a few melodies – from Wire and The Stranglers, Elastica crafted witty, punchy, pop punk that referenced Adam & The Ants, Buzzcocks and Blondie. Their three-quarter female line-up and 'last gang in town' image made them easily the coolest band of the era.

The band also did the one thing that nearly all other Britpop bands failed to do: break America. With two singles charting on the *Billboard* Hot 100, their album sold over half a million copies in the US, and they joined Sonic Youth, Hole, Beck, and Cypress Hill for 1995's *Lollapalooza* festival. The scene was set for Elastica to transcend the Britpop tag and become an international success.

However, it would take five years for the follow-up album to arrive, personal issues, drug habits and line-up changes blamed for the overlong gestation, and the band quietly

## beyond thunder's drone

### Did Britpop squeeze out Britrock?

**By Joel McIver**

Britain has always been a nation of headbangers, inventing heavy metal circa 1970 and exporting the stuff worldwide. Our nation's love of all things loud and leathery may not have been obvious in the Britpop era, when everyone supposedly forgot about the existence of Iron Maiden and Judas Priest, but that didn't stop a whole wave of British heavy rock bands from flourishing anyway – regardless of whichever scene people associated them with.

Consider the evidence. **Stereophonics** formed in 1992 and were massive from 1997; **Ash** also got together in '92, and their debut album, *1977,* was a No 1 hit four years later; and keen Nirvana fans **Bush** found a willing American audience by 1996. Those cheery chaps **Supergrass** were all over the charts with *I Should Coco* in '95, while **Skunk Anansie** were inescapable in 1996 and '97. Alan McGee-sponsored punk project **3 Colours Red,** got together in 1994 and delivered a hit with *Pure* in '97; **Terrorvision** poured us all Tequila in '98; and **Reef**, formed in 1994, reached No 6 with Place Your Hands in '97. At that point **Feeder**, **Muse** and **Placebo** appeared with yet more amped-up stuff, helping to make the second half of the decade unsociably loud.

Bear in mind that we haven't even mentioned British rock stalwarts such as the **Manic Street Preachers**, formed in 1986, the **Wildhearts** and **Thunder** from 1989, or Madchester-era bands such as **Primal Scream** who were still doing great business in the mid- to late 90s. Then you had **Radiohead**, who barely engaged with the Britpop term, issuing three classic guitar-heavy albums – *Pablo Honey* (1993), *The Bends* (1995) and *OK Computer* (1997) – while Cool Britannia hysteria raged around them.

The big picture is that Britpop and Britrock co-existed perfectly happily, although the latter might have enjoyed more exposure without the former. Note that the two strands sometimes added to the chaos by overlapping. In fact, they completely merged for two glorious minutes on 7 April 1997, when Blur released the massively riffy Song 2 – which, ironically, opened a market up for them among Americans who thought they were a metal band. You can imagine the confusion among the Metallica-worshipping concert-goers in Nebraska when Damon Albarn started singing Parklife...

# oasis v blur

## Who is the most collectable?

**By John Coleman**

The Oasis v Blur face-off was a defining moment in 90s music. When Blur's poppy Country House and Oasis' rocky Roll With It singles were released on the same day in August 1995, the ensuing chart battle dominated the news worldwide.

Unless you were there, it's hard to imagine how culturally significant and all-encompassing this intense rivalry was in Summer 1995. Yet for record buyers, it wasn't such a polarising experience. Most people were fans of both bands, so they bought the two singles. Blur won the battle, with 270,000 sales to 220,000; but Oasis won the war, being the eventual financial winners due to Blur's single retailing at 99p, while Oasis were charging a whopping £1.99 (meanwhile, of course, their attendant albums – *The Great Escape* and *[What's The Story] Morning Glory* – saw a comprehensive victory for the Mancs over the Londoners).

The rivalry was a feeding frenzy for the mainstream media, who billed it as not just a chart battle, but an existential, working class v middle class, north v south, cultural phenomenon. Yet both bands had plenty in common and a complex love-hate relationship. Oasis manager (and Creation label boss) Alan McGee and Blur frontman Damon Albarn were Chelsea fans who met up regularly at matches. The whole media circus actually ended up furthering the career of both bands.

But the key question remains: who is the most collectable? In truth, both Blur and Oasis have impressive collectability credentials. Both bands are as popular as ever, with a wide-ranging demographic. Blur's *Best Of* 2xLP set (from the post-Britpop period of 2000) can command over £200 matched by the 1,000-only Oasis 3LP set *Familiar To Millions* (from the same period), which is now a premium collectable at over £300.

All Oasis 7" singles are highly sought-after, with the 1994 Live Forever 7" now worth £80. Blur's singles are equally popular, but not quite as collectable. However, Blur have three high-value singles – Out Of Time, Crazy Beat (£200 each) and Good Song (worth £300) – helped by the fact they have distinctive artwork designed by Banksy.

**MOST WERE FANS OF BOTH BANDS AND BOUGHT THE TWO**

Despite the numerous LP reissues by both artists, original pressings of *Blur*, *Parklife* and *Think Tank* can go for more than £200. Oasis's first issue LPs such as *What's The Story* (£160), the *Be Here Now* mail-order vinyl Box Set (£200) and *Definitely Maybe* can also command £160. Does this mean it is a draw?

Blur had their fair share of delectable promo items: The Wassailing Song, a 500-only one-sided gig freebie, can be impossible to find for under £200 while the one-sided *Think Tank* 12" 250-only promo sampler with hand-stamped *Petrol Head* artwork by Banksy comes in at £500.

It's the sheer amount of promos that Oasis unleashed upon the collecting world that gives them a distinct advantage. The legendary – almost good enough to pass for real currency – *Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants* promo £2 coins are now worth £150. The aesthetically pleasing *Vox Amp Box Set* is £500-plus. Oasis had a regular habit of putting out 12"s for DJ use only. Items such as Columbia and I Am The Walrus promo 12"s can hit £2,000 and £1,000 respectively.

Overall, then, we'd say it's a win for Oasis in the collectability derby.

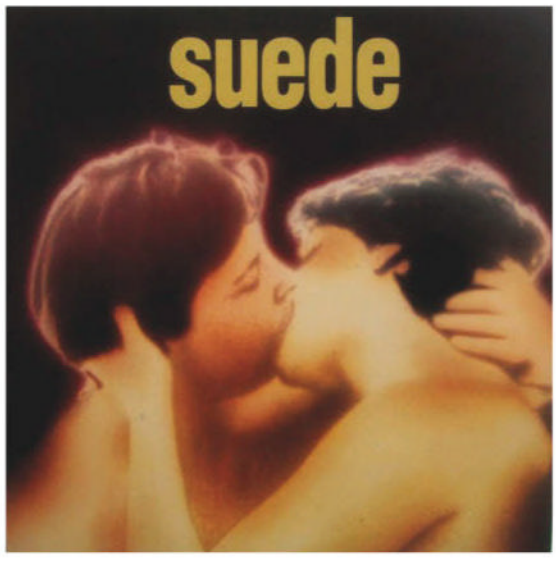
split in 2000. But their 1995 debut remains a peerless collection, enduring as well as any album of the era. ***Wesley Doyle***

**Suede *Suede*** (Nude Records NUDE 1LP, LP, UK, 1993) **£75**

By the time it was released in March 1993, anticipation for Suede's debut album was at fever pitch. Having been dubbed 'Britain's Best New Band' by *Melody Maker* less than a year earlier (and before they'd released any music), the band had already appeared on *Top Of The Pops*, had a Top 10 single, and appeared on 19 magazine front covers. The hype was palpable, and the naysayers were sharpening their knives.

But having spent three years being ignored – as well as being dumped by erstwhile rhythm guitarist Justine Frischmann for Blur's Damon Alban – singer Brett Anderson was not about to squander this opportunity. Along with preternaturally talented guitarist Bernard Butler, bassist Mat Osman, and drummer Simon Gilbert, the band had honed a collection of classic pop songs that found the middle-ground between Bowie's glam-rock flash and Morrissey's romantic miserabilism. Full of androgyny and attitude, and laced with an oft-overlooked bleak sense of humour, Suede's debut more than delivered.

As if setting a Mike Leigh film to music, lyrically Anderson took suburban ennui and infused it with an outsider's love of the big city and all the temptations it offered. "Let's chase the dragon," exhorted opener So Young before crashing into bone fide hit single Animal Nitrate. But trashy glamour was only one facet of the band, and over the course of the album a stately and elegiac side was revealed. The likes of She's Not Dead and Pantomime Horse upped the atmospherics, Butler giving Anderson's kitchen-sink dramas intricate and layered settings. "Does your love only come… in a Volvo," howled the singer on Breakdown, as Butler's guitars arched skyward, setting new standards for underachieving indie bands. Such ambition reached an apotheosis with The Next Life, a flamboyantly orchestrated showstopper that pointed towards the band's next, troubled yet ambitious long player, *Dog Man Star*.




But all that was to come. In 1993 Suede's debut album went straight to No 1, becoming the fastest-selling UK album for a decade, eventually winning the Mercury Music Prize. The tour that supported the album saw rabid fandom not seen since the heyday of their heroes, The Smiths. It seemed in Suede people had found a band they could believe in – for a while, at least.

***Wesley Doyle***

**Supergrass *I Should Coco***
(Parlophone PCSX 7373, LP, UK, 1995) **£70**
The Harvester isn't the most rock'n'roll of pub chains, but it played an important role in the formation of Supergrass: the Oxford branch is where Gaz Coombes first met Micky Quinn when they were both working there in summer 1993. Soon after, Coombes invited Quinn to jam with him and his pal Danny Goffey – the pair had been in indie band The Jennifers and issued a single on Nude in 1992.

Clicking immediately, the three of them formed Supergrass, initially Theodore Supergrass, and pooling their earnings, decamped to Cornwall's Sawmills studio to put down six songs in five days. These, the basis of *I Should Coco*, are the sound of teenage kicks personified. Their first single, Caught By The Fuzz, a heart-palpitating hormonal rush with buzzsaw guitars, owed a debt to the Buzzcocks and, championed by John Peel, was awarded both *NME* and *Melody Maker*'s Single Of The Week. Snowballing quickly from there, second single Mansize Rooster gifted them their first Top 20 hit, third single Lenny made the Top 10 and their fourth single, Alright, hit No 2. The latter has since become shorthand for the group, thanks to its infernally catchy chorus and promo video which caught the trio cavorting around Portmeirion on bicycles. It definitely grabbed Steven Spielberg's attention – he offered them a *Monkees*-styled TV show. They politely declined.

This unimpeachable run of singles helped *I Should Coco* hit No 1 and go platinum. It also became Parlophone's best-selling debut album since The Beatles' *Please Please Me*. The album tracks, though, are equally compelling with Time and Sofa (Of My Lethargy) revealing a greater maturity and musicianship that hinted at a group with staying power. Sugergrass went on to record a further five albums to prove it. ***Lois Wilson***

**Saint Etienne *So Tough*** (Heavenly HVNLP 6, LP, UK, 1993) ***£30***
Britpop might have become synonymous with guitar bands, but one of the first acts to be considered part of the movement (or at the very least, fellow travellers) were this London-loving dance-pop project founded by future *RC* contributor Bob Stanley and his Croydon schoolfriend, Pete Wiggs. They were, of course, among those named on *that* 1993 *Select* magazine front cover (the one that also featured Pulp, Suede and The Auteurs and seemed to fire the starting gun for Britpop and the end of US grunge rock's domination of the UK media) and the way their enduring affection for UK pop culture laced their music so recurrently meant they would always be honorary Britpop royalty.

Having initially intended to take the Massive Attack approach of using guest singers to front their songs, as they had on their 1991 debut *Foxbase Alpha,* Stanley and Wiggs brought in Sarah Cracknell as a permanent member of the band for this follow-up, and her cotton wool vocals and songwriting contributions lend a more coherent feel to the set.

Gorgeously groggy, dewy-eyed visions such as opening track Mario's Café, evoking the feeling of "Tuesday morning 10am", have traces of the sweetly modest, huggably semi-professional aesthetic of C86 indie, flecked with folky, sun-dappled flute and beams of violin poking through the capital's clouds. But elsewhere it's an eclectic stew, taking in the chilled house of Junk The Morgue and the trip-hoppy throb and rap of Calico, interspersed with snatches of film dialogue and random chat, plus samples from sources as ear-prickingly diverse as Rush and The Incredible Bongo Band.

The singles remain the standouts: the starry-eyed pop reverie of Avenue; the tenderly imploring You're In A Bad Way; the melancholic yet surreal Hobart Paving. These crafted pop confections were soft, sweet and sad enough to be the antithesis of the laddishness that would latterly prevail on the Britpop scene. *So Tough* still sounds timelessly intoxicating. ***Johnny Sharp***

**The Boo Radleys**
***Giant Steps*** (Creation CRELP 149, 2LP, UK, 1993) **£60**
Wake Up Boo! is one of Britpop's staple singles, still beloved of breakfast DJs. However, its parent album, *Wake Up!,* marked the first sign of fissures in a band uncertain of how much they should capitalise on the kind of tunes they could dash off in their sleep.

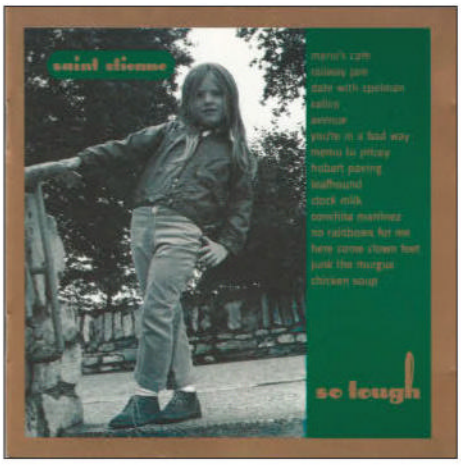
The Boos' previous album remains their towering statement, perfectly poised between shoegaze and Britpop at a time when anything seemed possible, both for the band and British music: naming their third album after the John Coltrane LP was an obvious declaration of their intention to present themselves as purveyors of pop at its most fearless and expansive.

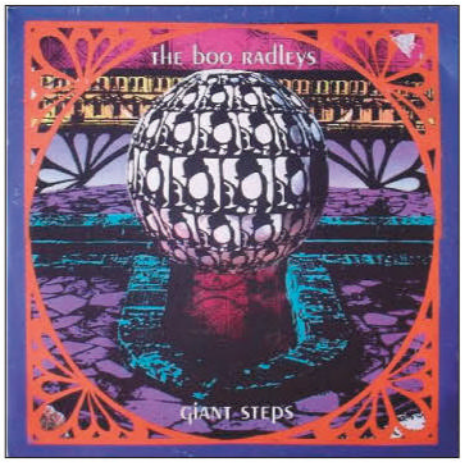
Jangly singles Wish I Was Skinny and Barney (…And Me) were Britpop precursors with their classic melodicism. With its woodwind refrain, the latter even predicted the coming of Belle And Sebastian. Yet those two aforementioned singles provided rare moments of easy charm. Album opener I Hang Suspended was a call to arms, a rallying cry confirming that The Boo Radleys would not be contained by genre boundaries. Martin Carr proved himself a supremely adept guitarist across a range of styles from dub to jazz while Sice Rowbottom added his plaintive vocals. It took some skills to navigate the songs' numerous ideas without falling apart, notably on Upon 9th And Fairchild and Butterfly McQueen.

Carr has refused to join the rest of his bandmates in The Boo Radleys' ongoing reunion since 2020. Perhaps he feels the band reached an unrepeatable peak with the majestic *Giant Steps*. ***John Earls***

**Black Grape *It's Great When You're Straight…Yeah*** (Radioactive RAR 11224, LP, UK, 1995) **£50**
Although the three years between Happy Mondays' final album *Yes Please!* and Black Grape's debut is now a standard release schedule, it seemed an ominously long wait for Shaun Ryder's return at the time.

The Mondays' chemically impaired collapse in the Bahamas making *Yes Please!* with Tom Tom Club's Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth was both a startling tale of excess and a cautionary warning of how not to run a record company. But the story of *Yes Please!* has been so frequently told that it now unfairly overshadows how Ryder managed to follow it with a quite sensational comeback.



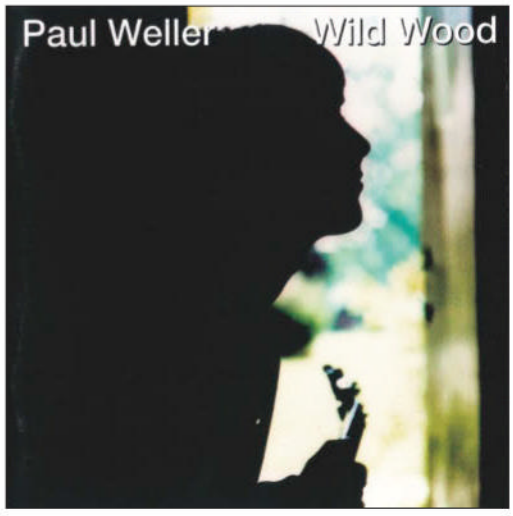
Ryder got clean, roping in fellow reformed hedonist Kermit, of Ruthless Rap Assassins. Completely written off after the *Yes Please!* fiasco, Black Grape's mesmeric first club gigs had critics gibbering about how Ryder was somehow instead managing to top *Pills 'n' Thrills And Bellyaches* with his new band.

Sure enough, the first half of the duo's debut really is the ultimate example of Ryder's surrealist insight, backed up by a freeflowing groove that's as close as any producers have yet come to capturing how it sounds inside Ryder's head.

It helped having Kermit's equally vivid imagination to bounce off, with Reverend Black Grape and Kelly's Heroes remaining taut party starters. In truth, it almost invents frontloading as a concept for albums, as you can virtually hear the pair collapse during the course of its listless second half. At least Black Grape's gigs remained transcendent for the *It's Great…* tour.

Even though second album *Stupid Stupid Stupid* was so messy it makes *Yes Please!* look like *Revolver*, Kermit has remained Ryder's most useful creative foil since Black Grape returned in 2010. They've subsequently made two very decent albums, while Happy Mondays have yet to bother the studio since 2007's humdrum *Uncle Dysfunktional*.

***John Earls***




**Paul Weller** ***Wild Wood***
(Go! Discs 828 435-1, LP, 1993) **£120**

At *Wild Wood*'s core is traditional songwriting: the 60s mod-rock values of his childhood heroes the Small Faces, but filtered through the acoustic folk of Weller's then-recently discovered Nick Drake, Traffic, Tim Hardin and Neil Young. It fanfared the arrival of something new. While 1992's solo debut, a thrilling mix of acid jazz and soulful vibes, had reminded fans what he was capable of, this one took him overground and into the spotlight.

Today the tracklisting reads like a greatest hits – its two Top 20 singles, the cosmic Sunflower and redemptive title track, what Weller rightly called "a modern day folk song"; Has My Fire Really Gone Out, his angry riposte to critics and peers who'd written him off (the infamous "how the mighty have fallen – it's not even a Style Council B-side" comment on single Uh Huh Oh Yeah from Suede's Brett Anderson); Shadow Of The Sun with its closing psychedelic jam, a peak of his 90s live show; the delicate Foot Of The Mountain and the impossibly raw All The Pictures On The Wall about a bruised marriage. Recorded at The Manor, a residential studio in Shipton-On-Cherwell near Oxford, the core of the band, alongside Weller, comprised drummer Steve White, Young Disciples bassist Marco Nelson and flute/horn player Jacko Peake, all of whom had been on his first LP. They were then joined by assorted pals: Ocean Colour Scene's Simon Fowler and Steve Cradock, the latter soon to become a permanent fixture in Weller's band and still present today, guest on The Weaver, one of the album's real underrated gems; Blow Monkeys Dr Robert, Weller's friend from TSC days, contributes guitar on the gorgeous acoustic Country, while former Style Councillors Mick Talbot and Dee C Lee also contribute. Reaching No 2, Weller never looked back.

***Lois Wilson***

## nice & clean

### Britpop: the next generation.

**By Wesley Doyle**

What's the real legacy of Britpop? While testy op-eds blame it for everything from legislated nostalgia to Brexit, the long-tail influence can be found in a crop of current bands celebrating what it means to be British in 2024, with all the energy – and none of the laddish hubris – of 1994.

On the surface at least, **Welly** cleave closest to the Britpop of Pulp and Blur, with arch observations delivered over spiky guitar and squelchy synth. Current single Soak Up The Culture/Shopping (digital only at the moment) arches an eyebrow and cocks a snook at contemporary British life, with a dry humour that's all too rare.

Running parallel to Britpop in the 90s was Jungle, and the rise of the two genres was not only analogous, but also fertile ground for collaboration. Anyone remember Goldie and Noel Gallagher's Temper Temper? **Nia Archives** does, and with her debut album, *Silence Is Loud* (Island Records 6500354, LP, UK, 2024), she draws a line between the two genres to create stadium-pleasing pop. The Union Jack grill on her tooth that adorns the sleeve is replicated on a limited-edition vinyl pressing, to drive home the point that her music is a British as it comes.

Despite the reputation of laddishness, 90s indie was notable for strong female-led bands, such as Echobelly, Lush and Kenickie. **Rachel Chinouriri** grew up on Britpop and while it's an influence, it's just a starting point. Her debut, *What A Devastating Turn Of Events* (Atlas Artists 5054197899997, LP, UK, 2024), takes the template and combines it with contemporary pop to reflect her experience of black working-class London. If you're looking for 2024's *Parklife*, this is it.

Short, sharp punk-pop songs of the wry and witty variety were Britpop's stock in trade, and **Jopy** has them in abundance. Her new single, Head Hunters Pub and Grub (taken from the forthcoming *Planet Zombie* EP out in September via Goo Records), is the midpoint between Elastica and PJ Harvey's twangier moments. The Bolan-voiced 21-year-old reminds us Britpop was more diverse and inclusive than it's remembered for and, for a while at least, was a home for outsiders everywhere.

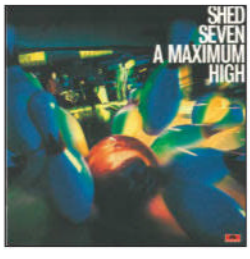
Photo: Emma Austin

# they're alright!

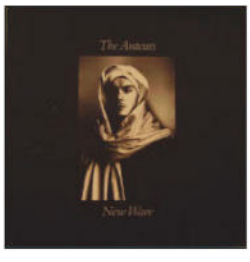
## The other great Britpop LPs

**My Life Story *Mornington Crescent*** (Mother Tongue MOTHER LP1, LP, UK, 1995) **£50**
My Life Story tapped into Britpop's trash-glam feather boa aesthetic. The band's in-house orchestra propelled Jake Shillingford's big dreams and bigger choruses. Headrush arrangements ensured strings were used to their full potential on songs resonating with high drama. ***JE***

**Sleeper *Smart*** (Indolent, SLEEPLP007A, LP, UK, 1995) **£30**
At the time of *The Fast Show* and Reeves And Mortimer, Britpop could be funny, too. No one was sharper than Louise Wener, whose eye for detail was worthy of Squeeze. Add in chunky guitars showcasing Sleeper's Breeders infatuation and *Smart* remains an intoxicating mix. ***JE***



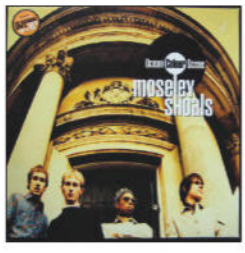

**Shed Seven *A Maximum High*** (Polydor, 531039-1, LP, UK, 1996) **£80**
If their terrible name ensured they instantly became Britpop's easiest punchline, the strength of Shed Seven's yearning anthems means they still fill arenas in 2024. Although a great singles band, their second album neatly captured their craft catching up with their ambition. ***JE***



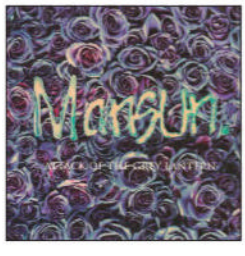
**The Auteurs *New Wave*** (Hut Recordings HUTLP 7, LP, UK, 1993) **£40**
A vehicle for Britpop's big bad wolf turned *RC* columnist, Luke Haines, The Auteurs, name-checked in *Select* magazine's infamous 'Yanks Go Home' April 1993 edition, provide the movement's manual with the Bolan boogie of Show Gir, Junk Shop Clothes et al.
***LW***

**Echobelly *Everyone's Got One*** (Fauve Records faut 3lp, LP, UK, 1994) **£25**
Within a predominately white male genre, Sonya Madan explores notions of British identity on Echobelly's debut Everyone's Got One (i.e. EGO), soundtracking the Asian female experience with songs about empowerment (Give Her A Gun), agency (I Can't Imagine The World Without Me) and abortion (Bellyache). ***LW***

**Gene *Olympian*** (Costermonger GENE1LP, LP, UK, 1995) **£50**
Their singer was indebted to Morrissey and The Smiths; the band behind him to The Jam and Small Faces. Together their mix of the soulful and muscular with the affected and studied made for an interesting combination served up best on their inaugural long-player. ***LW***



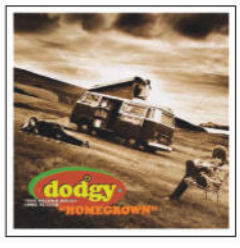

**Ocean Colour Scene *Moseley Shoals*** (MCA MCA 60008, 2LP, UK, 1996) **£100**
Brummie quartet swap baggy grooves for blues rock bluster and, endorsed by Noel Gallagher, Paul Weller and Chris Evans, take the charts by storm with singles The Riverboat Song, You've Got It Bad, The Day We Caught The Train and The Circle, all here. ***LW***



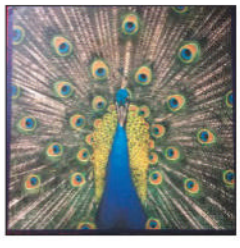

**Mansun *Attack Of The Grey Lantern*** (Parlophone PCS 7387, 2LP, UK, 1997) **£60**
Heading up Britpop's second wave, Mansun made headlines when they threw £25,000 in £5 notes onto the main concourse of London's Liverpool Street Station during rush hour and filmed it for their video for single Taxloss. Intriguing, intelligent indie, it also includes Stripper Vicar and Wide Open Space. ***LW***

**Cornershop *When I Was Born For The 7th Time*** (Wiija Records WIJLP 1065, 2LP, UK, 1997) **£50**
The group's Mercury-nominated third album was a work of genius; its mix of indie, hip hop, 60s pop and Punjabi cinema providing Britpop with one of its most enduring additions while turning Tjinder Singh into a reluctant pop star when Norman Cook remixed lead single Brimful Of Asha.
***LW***

**The Verve *Urban Hymns*** (Hut HUTLP 45, 2LP, UK, 1997) **£150**
*A Northern Soul* (1995) is arguably its equal, but when the Wiganers' follow-up dropped as Britpop's creative spark faltered, it offered an anthemic redrawing of the song-centric blueprint Oasis set in place. Resigned and defiant by turns, but ultimately triumphant. ***JS***




**Dodgy *Homegrown*** (A&M 540 282-1, LP, UK, 1994) **£50**
Its successor, *Free Peace Sweet* (1996), has bigger hits on, but the underrated Midlanders' second surfed in on Britpop's first wave, adding sun-kissed harmonies and irresistibly wistful melodies to the bumptious mix. Oh, and closing psychedelic epic Grassman is a lost classic. ***JS***



**The Bluetones *Expecting To Fly*** (Superior Quality Recordings BLUELP 004, LP, UK, 1996) **£50**
This Hounslow quartet knocked Oasis off the top of the album charts with this debut, which blended the chiming guitars of The Stone Roses with a plaintively melodic beta-male vocal charm laced with lyrical wit.
***JS***

# the singles

**By Lois Wilson**

**Flowered Up**
**Weekender**
(Heavenly HVN 16, 12", UK, 1992) **£20**
Joining the dots between the 60s mod all-nighters and the then-current rave/baggy scene, Weekender, with its *Quadrophenia* samples and accompanying video, sowed the seeds for a mod resurgence and Britpop proper.

**The Charlatans**
**Can't Get Out Of Bed**
(Beggars Banquet BBQ 27, 7", UK, 1994) **£5**
Never expected to last beyond the baggy era they helped define, The Charlatans outlived the Mondays and Roses and, with the mod pop and soulful rhythm of Can't Get Out Of Bed, captured the changing times.

**Corduroy**
**Motorhead / London England**
(Acid Jazz JAZID 95T, 12", UK, 1994) **£6**
Acid Jazz four-piece rode the Britpop wave with their if the-90s-were-the-new-60s semi-instrumental, a tongue-in-cheek tribute to the UK capital's club scene and unofficial Blow Up anthem.

**Ash Kung Fu**
(Infectious Records INFECT 21S, 7", UK, 1995) **£10**
Ash brought a youthful exuberance and revolutionary verve to Britpop with singles Girl From Mars and Kung Fu. The latter was a spunky pop-punk blast featuring a photo of the then-Man Utd footballer Eric Cantona 'kung-fuing' the crowd on the sleeve.

**Menswe@r**
**I'll Manage Somehow**
(Laurel LAU4, 7", UK, 1995) **£5**
Despite the huge hype, their debut

Photos: Alan Reck; Mark L Hill

Pimlico in 1994, with Wesley second left and Andy Lewis far right

# I WAS A BRITPOP ALSO-RAN!

**By Wesley Doyle**

Pimlico had been playing in one form or another since the late 80s, despite their mod power pop being completely out of step with what was going on at the time. I'd been in bands since I was a teenager, mainly indie-rock stuff, and we played the same local circuit. Towards the end of 1993, though, it was obvious something was going on in the UK. There was a move towards a more homegrown form of expression, and a rejection of grunge. It was really exciting, and I wanted to be part of it, so I joined Pimlico as the singer, and we started gigging.

The bassist Andy Lewis was (and still is) a well-respected DJ and was involved with Blow Up, which along with Club Smashing was a focal point for the emerging scene. I don't think anyone was calling it Britpop then – it was a mixture of northern soul, lounge, soundtracks, weird 60s pop and post-punk. It was really DIY and inclusive, and very cool.

Pimlico often played at Blow Up, and Andy and the club's founder, Paul Tunkin, had DJ'd on Blur's *Parklife* tour, boosting our profile. In less than a year we had a record deal.

**IT WAS A GREAT TIME TO BE IN A BAND**

Our first EP came out in early '95 and the lead track, Queenie, was picked up by Radio 1 indie champions Steve Lamacq and Jo Whiley's *The Evening Session* and played to death, although we had to re-record one line from it so it could be played on Radio 2. Then *The Chart Show* got in touch asking for a video so our record company – who weren't used to their bands being played on the radio let alone appearing on TV – rustled up some money for a video shoot. We had to squeeze the recording into a small tour we were doing, which was zigzagging across the country.

For 18 months we had a blast – it was a great time to be in a band and it did feel that London was our oyster, especially Camden and the West End. Lots of parties, after-shows, gigs, that sort of thing. We used to drink in the Good Mixer (a well-known Britpop dive in Camden), hang out at Blow Up and Club Smashing, and have presenters from *The Girlie Show* come to our gigs. We even had the obligatory night out with Graham Coxon. It couldn't have been any more 90s, and I was young enough to deal with the hangovers.

The vibe did start to change towards the end of 1996: the camaraderie between bands seemed to have evaporated, and there was a lot more snark and swagger around. The drugs had changed, too, going from cheap speed to cocaine, and whispers of heroin use from some of the bigger hitters. It did seem a long way from the little DIY scene of only a few years earlier.

Pimlico released three EPs which did pretty well, and we headlined London's Marquee twice. But by the time our album, *Housebound,* finally came out at the end of 1997 the music press had moved on and it disappeared without a trace (although *RC*'s John Earls did tip us for the top in a *News Of The World* feature!). At the time a lot of bands recorded albums that were shelved completely, so I guess we were lucky ours was even released.

Time, however, has been kind to Pimlico: John Harris mentioned the band in his Britpop tome, *The Last Party* (Harper), and in recent years tracks have been licensed for compilation albums with a Britpop theme. And one of the big 90s indie festivals regularly approaches us to reform and play, although the timing has never been right.

Maybe next year...

***Wesley Doyle's new book on the secret history of Britpop will be published in 2025.***

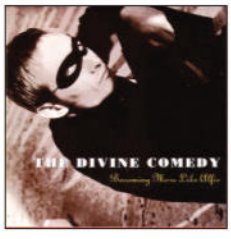
single still only just scraped the Top 40. Still, it captures Britpop's 'boy band' at their clean-living-under-difficult-circumstances mod nous best.

**McAlmont & Butler**
**Yes** (Hut Recordings HUTDX 53, CD, UK, 1995) **£2**

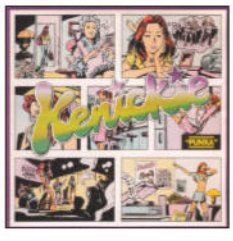
Ex-Suede guitarist Bernard Butler teamed up with former Thieves singer David McAlmont and, under the influence of Dusty, constructed Britpop's classiest single with this sublime piece of indie soul plus orchestral swells.

**Cast Alright**
(Polydor 579 926 7, 7", UK, 1995) **£6**

The La's bassist John Power made good on his early promise at the helm of his new group's second single, a Mersey beat pop anthem with crashing drums and thrusting guitars and a lyric about it being alright.

**The Divine Comedy**
**Becoming More Like Alfie** (Setanta SET 27 7, 7", UK, 1996) **£5**


Neil Hannon adopts three-button hand me down and, with rakish charm, repurposes Scott Walker for the Britpop age, indeed becoming more like Alfie (a cheeky reference to the titular character in the 1966 film starring Michael Caine).

**Kenickie Punka**
(Emidisc DISC 001, 7", UK, 1996) **£2**


This kick-ass 45 views Britpop through a riot grrrl lens and the three girl/one boy combo – named after the T Birds leader in movie *Grease* – also introduced the world to DJ/presenter Lauren Laverne.

**Earl Brutus Navyhead**
(Deceptive BLUFF 25, 7", UK, 1996) **£3**

While token Britpop elders like BabyBird scaled the Top 3, no pop chart could entrap these art-trash riot glammers. Navyhead – think School's Out sung by Wetherspoons customers at closing time – is but one example of their craft. File next to: Shampoo's Trouble. ***DE***

# WHY BRITPOP SUCKS

***By David Stubbs***

A 2003 Britpop documentary asserted that early 90s rock music was in the doldrums, only to be rescued by the mighty fleet of Britpop, with Oasis steaming majestically forth surrounded by a flotilla that included Cast, The Bluetones and Northern Uproar.

This was risible. Whereas previous upheavals in UK rock were transformative, necessary, we were in no need of "rescuing" from anything, least of all by Britpop, in the mid-90s. Rescued from what? Radiohead? The Manic Street Preachers? My Bloody Valentine? Throwing Muses? Massive Attack? Orbital? Or, from across the Atlantic, the giddying waves of Nirvana, Pixies, Dinosaur Jr?

The great psychedelic movement of the 60s had dragged pop and rock from repressive, uniformed monochrome into countercultural colour. The detonation of punk would lead immediately to the urgent, inclusive insurgence of post-punk, later new pop. The whole baggy, Madchester scene wiped away the fractiousness, the tense tribalism of the 80s in favour of a better, more ecstatically communal future promised by the impending 90s.

## IT FELT SMALL-C CONSERVATIVE IN COMPARISON

Britpop, on the other hand, felt suspiciously small-c conservative by comparison – it felt brought into being by a subconscious desire for a new Carnaby St-type British cool, with 1996 as the new 1966 – Oasis as The Beatles, the Euro 1996 England team as the World Cup 1966 England team, the incoming Tony Blair as Harold Wilson. Lots of white heat, with an unfortunate emphasis on "white".

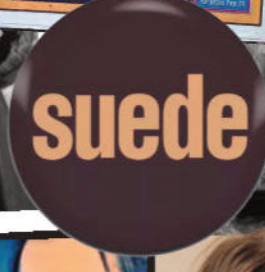
This was a culminating cultural moment, followed by disappointment on all fronts. Britpop is said by some to have begun with Suede, on account of Brett Anderson's drawling, cockney-ish vowels, but really, Suede don't deserve this bracketing – they belong to a preceding, queer, mod-ish tradition along with Bolan and Cockney Rebel. Ditto Pulp, who had been knocking at pop's door since 1981.

Britpop's first stirring was more likely with Blur, and *Modern Life Is Rubbish*, conceived in the aftermath of a fraught American tour which left them in a strong mood to compose "English atmospheres". In interviews, they professed British values and stances, right down to the horse brasses behind English bars, while berating the unwelcome American invasion of grunge.

Oasis, meanwhile, who initially seemed like a bracing, healthily toxic addition to the guitar air of the 90s, would achieve a massive success which gravitationally altered the UK music scene. The success of The Stone Roses had indicated a collective pining for a new Beatles, a single group we could all agree on, standing in a field or stadium, swaying all together. The Roses flinched from the role; Oasis took it instead.

Yes, there were women in Britpop but the whole movement, thanks to Oasis's enormous pull, was characterised by a retrograde, laddish, anti-electro, dully guitar-driven, funkless ethos, as if rolling back decades of evolution and diversification. This was Britpop: a reaction against internationalism, the eclecticism and range of modern music too confusing for some, and, frankly, a bulwark against the rise of black musics. The English Rock Defence League (copyright the late, great Neil Kulkarni), for sure. A moment of cultural hubris that later found its reactionary apotheosis in Brexit. Would that it had never happened.

**Britpopped in, sold out (clockwise from left): Sleeper's Louise Wener prepares to sweep the supermarket with the late, great Dale Winton, Black Grape, Elastica, Saint Etienne, Paul Weller, prole art junkstore Britpunks Jacqui and Carrie of Shampoo, and Suede Mk 1**



# common people

## The stars of Britpop speak!

### Bob Stanley of SAINT ETIENNE

**Saint Etienne were one of the groups named on the cover of *Select* magazine's 'Yanks Go Home' issue in April 1993. Could you tell something was coming?**

It didn't feel like the beginning or centre of something, it just felt like here is a bunch of groups who have a kinship. There had been a lot of US groups on magazine front covers, and it felt like a reaction to that, but it didn't feel like anything was going to explode. We were pretty tight with Pulp and Denim, and I tried to become friends with Suede embarrassingly by hassling Bernard Butler going, "We're going to do this and do that, and we should get together" and he obviously wasn't remotely interested [laughs]. *Select* gives a real idea of how the Britpop era felt: posters of Andy Warhol and Edie Sedgwick, or Tricky, were just as likely to be in there as Pulp.

**For a genre with 'Brit' in its name, in its early days at least, it was actually a very international scene.**

It was really international. Europe's borders opening up in 1992 really helped and Japan was opening up, too. Pizzicato 5 were getting played in clubs, French 60s pop beyond Serge Gainsbourg was getting played with people discovering Jacques Dutronc and France Gall and that seemed to feed into what became Britpop. Simon Reynolds called us and World Of Twist 'retro-futurist' which I quite liked but retro-futurist just meant modernist to me. Creating something new from the past and going forward is modernism.

**Where were you hanging out at this time?**

Blow Up at the Laurel Tree with DJ Andy Lewis who always played great records and Smashing with DJ Martin Green who was also important. When [Blur's] Girls And Boys came out, he played it every third record and it felt like an event. It's odd it's seen in isolation because people would be buying Supergrass and Metalheadz. It was never, "Guitar music is back, we can ditch all this other stuff." The energy of early Elastica and the first Supergrass singles were like the energy you'd hear in a Shut Up And Dance record.

**Interview: Lois Wilson**
**Bob Stanley writes a column for *Record Collector*.**

### Nick Banks of PULP

**What do you make of Britpop?**

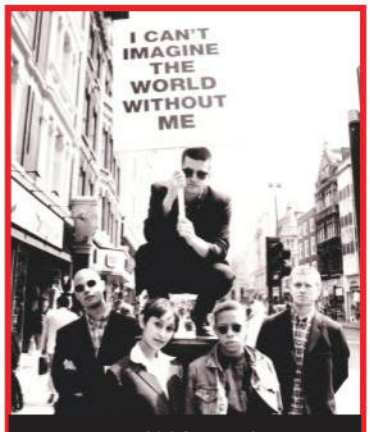
Hindsight is wonderful. It's great to say now that there were 10 bands with a similar outlook and development, who used a similar-ish template of influences, no matter how agreeable or otherwise that might be to the individuals involved. But at the time, it wasn't really like that. Pulp had already had our name attached to so many scenes in the previous three years that we thought: "Britpop? What are these idiots talking about?" We'd seen it all before, in scenes which had all fizzled out. But Britpop seemed to be the right monicker at the right time. We'd just had grebo and grunge. Now, here were bands who offered something to kids who wanted something more flamboyant and colourful. Sarah Cracknell [of Saint Etienne] was a big feather boa fan, for instance. Enjoying music can be an exciting, glamorous, show-your-feathers event, rather than slouching around in jeans where the bottom five inches are mud-caked.

**How did it feel to break through after years on the margins?**

It was great, feeling exonerated after banging our drum for so long. From Razzamatazz to Something Changed, we had a run of singles where everything we did was gold dust. It seemed effortless. Then *This Is Hardcore* felt unique to us, rather than part of any wider comedown. It took us so long to realise what the album should be, when previously it had felt easy. We knew everyone was waiting for Pulp's next record, while we were thinking the tanks were currently dry. Jarvis wanted to be the observer, then he became the observed. That unnerved him. He'd got the success he'd desired for so long and it just felt, "Oh…" He had buyer's remorse. But we fought through those demons to come up with a pretty amazing album.

**Interview: John Earls**
***Nick Banks' memoir,* So It Started There, *is published in paperback on 28 September by Omnibus***

### Sonya Madan and Glenn Johansson of ECHOBELLY




Echobelly in 1994, with Glenn Johansson and Sonya Madan far left and second left respectively

**What do you recall of Britpop?**

**SONYA MADAN:** Britpop was a very creative time. People bang on about it being lad culture, but women gave everyone a run for their money. We weren't wallflowers. I don't think Britpop was as sexist as people say it is. There were elements of it, like the pastiche level of *Loaded*. But really it was an exploration of British identity.

**GLENN JOHANSSON:** It was an exciting time, creative in film, theatre, books and fashion as much as it was in all areas of music.

**SONYA:** It was a great period for dance music. I didn't go to gigs; I'd go clubbing instead. Where I struggled was that Echobelly were thrown in at the deep end. There were no colleges like the Brit School or BIMM to help you, you just had to get on with it. I was completely naïve. We'd been signed after only 10 gigs, and I was so earnest. Damon Albarn, who was very astute, took me under his wing a little. I learned it was a game, and Damon really knew how to play that game. But it was difficult, as I felt the need to express myself, knowing there was no one around like me.

**GLENN:** It was a great time for B-sides, which we enjoyed. When the pressure is off, you come up with totally different music. Plenty of our B-sides would have made better singles than the A-sides we chose. Great Things was also written as an afterthought, after our label wanted just one more track for *On*.

**Interview: John Earls**
***Echobelly play at Victorious Festival on 24 August***

## Louise Wener of SLEEPER

**What was Britpop like?**
By the time Sleeper supported Blur on the *Parklife* tour, there was a tangible feeling of uplift and optimism, of turning away from the self-analytical mood of grunge. Among bands, however, camaraderie was difficult. Everyone was trying for their own slice, and it felt cut-throat. We lived in Camden, where everyone was in leather jackets, stalking the same streets. In interviews, we'd all say: "It's just the music that counts," but everyone was obsessed with everyone else's midweeks [chart positions], as there was enormous pressure on you. Record companies forced you into feeling you had to have a certain level of success, which always felt like it could slip away.

**You soon became a music press favourite. Did you enjoy that?**
I grew up with pop, but you weren't allowed to talk about that in the 90s. The music press was incredibly earnest, and I struggled with how ideological it was. It felt like you had to come at music in a very specific way, pretending you felt the same as the inky journalists. To generalise, women often came to music in a different way than men and had different influences, but you had to talk about music in the ideological way men did. That felt alien, and I was never comfortable with it.

**What did you think of the "female-fronted indie band" tropes?**
The term "Sleeperblokes" was just so fucking tiresome, part of the misogyny of the time. As the frontwoman, I'd do the interviews, which in some way was seen as emasculating the other people in the band. It was another way of trying to put me in my box. You'd fight against how people addressed women, but you couldn't do it directly, as that meant you were shown to care about it. It felt like I was at war a lot of the time.

**Were you also uncomfortable with Britpop as a concept?**
There was a general discomfort with the populism of Britpop. It began as an outsiders' movement, but it became so mainstream that there was a slight unravelling, into a melancholy phase from bands of noticing what it had become. That compulsion to puncture itself felt like a self-destruct.

**Interview: John Earls**
***Sleeper's* Unplugged *tour runs until 22 June.***

## Steve Cradock of OCEAN COLOUR SCENE

**How was Britpop for you?**
It was an incredibly positive time. The Stone Roses and The La's came along and opened the door for so many great bands. The Charlatans were a great group and Supergrass were a great group. We were lucky to be outside of London, so we swerved all the competition.

**You were based in Birmingham. Where did you go?**
We went to Sweat every Saturday. The DJ, Cheese Dip, would be playing Indian vibes over the top of a Malcolm X speech and we'd all be on pills. It was a beautiful moment. It was like a new modernism.

**You joined Paul Weller's band during this time.**
We recorded [1992's *Ocean Colour Scene*] in [Solid Bond], Paul Weller's studio, with Jimmy Miller and he gave us a couple of support gigs and then I played on [1993 EP] *The Weaver* at The Manor in Oxfordshire and then after that I got the call. I had to go to an audition and must have passed – I've been playing with him for 30 years now. I learned a lot about playing the guitar over that first period from being around such great influences, through Paul and his musicians. And working hard. He's been the light of my life musically and a great friend.

**Did you know *Moseley Shoals* would be a hit when you were making it?**
We knew we were making a great album, we thought it sounded like Free, but using the template from Green Onions. There's a simplicity to the music; it was our version of that. While I was doing *The Weaver* with Paul I played the album demos to [*The Weaver* producer] Brendan Lynch and [engineer] Max Heyes and they said they'd mix it. But if Chris Evans hadn't got behind it, who knows? He played Riverboat Song back-to-back on his morning radio show and then on *TFI Friday*.

**Interview: Lois Wilson**
***Visit oceancolourscene.com for info on imminent OCS live dates***

## Tjinder Singh of CORNERSHOP

**What do you think of Britpop?**
Britpop is bigger now than it was at the time. It was a made-up title, though, when there were a lot of made-up titles. Cornershop weren't Britpop – we saw ourselves as an honorary riot grrrl band.

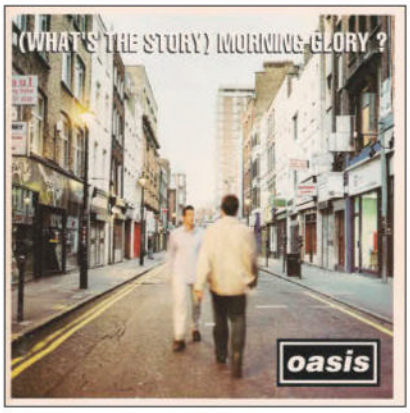
Being male, I saw our role in riot grrrl the same as reggae groups were to punk. We had gripes in common, politically as well as musically.

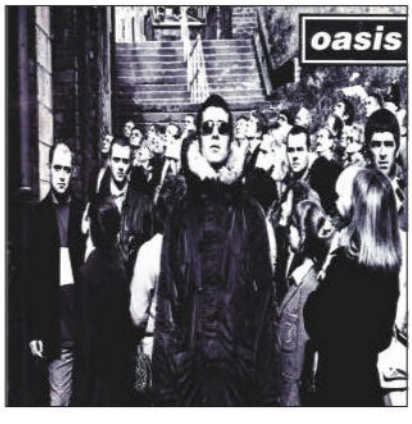
**There seemed to be media to provide leg-ups to success.**
Well, there wasn't just one music programme on TV, as there is now. There were lots of different avenues to explore. There were also many very different radio shows. Now, radio seems similar, whereas at the time shows didn't need to hold each other's hands from one programme to the next. Big changes in technology helped democratise music. Someone like me could now make music at home. Those changes also affected lighting, film and projections. It made shows more immersive.

**Was it an exciting time?**
In general, the 90s were very vibrant. I can't believe how astounding it was for moving things forward. Not just in music – culturally, the ideas were vibrant and colourful. It helped get the Tories out and changed the field. The Labour years were excellent compared to the very bad people in charge now.

In the following decade, we seemed to lose that vibrancy. If it was white-boy bands then, it became one white-boy: the singer-songwriter. Technology seemed to vanish, until it became one person with an acoustic guitar. It's become a better time for females, but overall, the variety in music has diminished since the 90s. It's terrible to have to say that. It makes me sad.

**Interview: John Earls**
***Cornershop now run the Ampleplay label, which put out their last album* England Is A Garden. *More info at ampleplay.co.uk.***






# oasis SELECTED UK Discography

**By John Coleman**

*Oasis' impressive run of singles and albums ranks among the greats, approaching the likes of The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Smiths in terms of quality, consistency and long-lasting cultural impact.*

## SINGLES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 94 | Creation CRE 176 | **Supersonic/Take Me Away** (7", p/s) | **£60** |
| 94 | Creation CRE 176T | **Supersonic/Take Me Away/I Will Believe (Live)** (12", p/s) | **£50** |
| 94 | Creation CRE 182 | **Shakermaker/D'Yer Wanna Be A Spaceman?** (7", p/s) | **£40** |
| 94 | Creation CRE 182T | **Shakermaker/D'Yer Wanna Be A Spaceman?/Alive (8 Track Demo** (12", p/s) | **£50** |
| 94 | Creation CRE 185 | **Live Forever/Up In The Sky (Acoustic)** (jukebox issue, large centre hole) (7") | **£25** |
| 94 | Creation CRE 185 | **Live Forever/Up In The Sky (Acoustic)** (numbered foldover p/s in stickered poly bag) (7") | **£55** |
| 94 | Creation CRE 185T | **Live Forever/Up In The Sky (Acoustic)/Cloudburst** (12", p/s) | **£60** |
| 94 | Creation CRE 190 | **Cigarettes & Alcohol/I Am The Walrus (live at Glasgow Cathouse June '94)** (7", p/s, numbered) | **£45** |
| 94 | Creation CRE 190T | **Cigarettes & Alcohol/I Am The Walrus (live at Glasgow Cathouse June '94)/ Fade Away** (12", p/s) | **£50** |
| 94 | Creation CRE 195 | **Whatever/(It's Good) To Be Free)** (numbered foldover p/s in stickered poly bag)(7") | **£40** |
| 94 | Creation CRE 195T | **Whatever/(It's Good) To Be Free/Slide Away**) (12"/p/s) | **£60** |
| 95 | Creation CRE 204 | **Some Might Say/Talk Tonight** (7", p/s) | **£25** |
| 95 | Creation CRE 204T | **Some Might Say/Talk Tonight/Acquiesce** (12", p/s) | **£50** |
| 95 | Creation CRE 212 | **Roll With It/It's Better People** (7", p/s) | **£25** |
| 95 | Creation CRE 212T | **Roll With It/It's Better People/Rockin' Chair** (12", p/s) | **£45** |
| 95 | Creation CRE 215 | **Wonderwall/Round Are Way** (7", wraparound p/s) | **£40** |
| 95 | Creation CRE 215T | **Wonderwall/Round Are Way/The Swamp Song** (12", p/s) | **£65** |
| 96 | Creation CRE 221 | **Don't Look Back In Anger/Step Out** (7", p/s with poly outer) | **£30** |
| 96 | Creation CRE 221T | **Don't Look Back In Anger/Step Out/Underneath The Sky** (12", p/s) | **£60** |
| 97 | Creation CRE 256 | **D'You Know What I Mean?/Stay Young** (7", gatefold, black or silver logo cover, p/s) | **£20** |
| 97 | Creation CRE 256T | **D'You Know What I Mean?/Stay Young/Angel Child (Demo)** (12", p/s) | **£35** |
| 97 | Creation CRE 278 | **Stand By Me/(I Got) The Fever** (7", gatefold, p/s) | **£35** |
| 97 | Creation CRE 278T | **Stand By Me/(I Got) The Fever/My Sister Lover** (12", p/s) | **£60** |
| 97 | Creation CRE 282 | **All Around The World/The Fame** (7", numbered, p/s) | **£25** |
| 97 | Creation CRE 282T | **All Around The World/The Fame/Flashbax** (12", p/s) | **£60** |
| 00 | Creation RKID 001 | **Go Let It Out/Let's All Make Believe/** (7", postcard, p/s) | **£25** |
| 00 | Creation RKID 001T | **Go Let It Out/Let's All Make Believe/(As Long As They've Got) Cigarettes In Hell** (12", p/s) | **£40** |
| 00 | Creation RKID 003 | **Who Feels Love/One Way Road**(7", p/s) | **£25** |
| 00 | Creation RKID 003T | **Who Feels Love/One Way Road/Helter Skelter** (12", p/s) | **£50** |
| 00 | Creation RKID 004 | **Sunday Morning Call/Carry Us All** (7", p/s) | **£30** |
| 00 | Creation RKID 004T | **Sunday Morning Call/Carry Us All/Full On** (12", p/s) | **£60** |
| 02 | Big Brother RKID 23 | **The Hindu Times/Just Getting Older** (7", p/s, limited edition) | **£15** |
| 02 | Big Brother RKID 23T | **The Hindu Times/Just Getting Older/Idler's Dream** (12", p/s) | **£40** |
| 02 | Big Brother RKID 24T | **Stop Crying Your Heart Out/Thank You For The Good Times/ Shout It Out Loud** (12", p/s) | **£40** |
| 02 | Big Brother RKID 26 | **Little By Little/She Is Love** (7", p/s, limited edition) | **£35** |
| 02 | Big Brother RKID 26T | **Little By Little/She Is Love/My Generation** (12", p/s) | **£60** |
| 03 | Big Brother RKID 27 | **Songbird/(You've Got) The Heart Of A Star** (7", p/s) | **£35** |
| 03 | Big Brother RKID 27T | **Songbird/(You've Got) The Heart Of A Star/Columbia (Live)** (12", p/s) | **£60** |
| 05 | Big Brother RKID 29 | **Lyla/Eyeball Tickler** (7", postcard, p/s) | **£18** |
| 05 | Big Brother RKID 31 | **The Importance of Being Idle/Pass Me Down The Wine** (7", p/s) | **£20** |
| 05 | Big Brother RKID 32 | **Let There Be Love/Sittin' Here In Silence (On My Own)** (10", p/s) | **£25** |
| 06 | Big Brother RKID 37 | **Stop The Clocks EP** (2 x 7", stickers, numbered, p/s) | **£35** |
| 08 | Big Brother RKID 52 | **The Shock Of The Lightning/Falling Down (The Chemical Brothers Remix)** (7", p/s) | **£15** |
| 08 | Big Brother RKID 52/SCD52 | **The Shock Of The Lightning/Falling Down (The Chemical Brothers Remix)** (7" and CD set in 7" x 7" box sold via fan club/mail order, p/s) | **£25** |
| 08 | Big Brother RKID 55 | **I'm Outta Time/To Be Where There's Life (Neon Neon Remix)** (7", glossy inner, p/s) | **£20** |
| 08 | Big Brother RKID 55X | **I'm Outta Time (Remix)/ The Shock Of The Lightning (The Jagz Kooner Remix)** (7", p/s) | **£15** |
| 09 | Big Brother RKID 56 | **Falling Down/Those Swollen Hand Blues** (7", p/s) **£20** | |
| 09 | Big Brother RKID 56T | **Falling Down (A Monstrous Psychedelic Bubble Exploding In Your Mind) (5 mixes)** (12", p/s) | **£30** |
| 14 | Big Brother RKID 70BOXX | **Whatever/(It's Good) To Be Free/Slide Away** (12", p/s, reissue, mail order or given away by band website with copies of *Definitely Maybe* boxed set) | **£40** |
| 14 | Big Brother RKID 74T | **Acquiesce** (12", 1-sided, sold by HMV shops) | **£35** |

24 Big Brother RKID 010C **Supersonic/Take Me Away** (7", Ltd Edition pearl vinyl, 30th anniversary issue, numbered, p/s) ..... **£20**

24 Big Brother RKIDCD 010 **Supersonic/Take Me Away/I Will Believe (Live)/ Columbia (White Label Demo)** (CD, Ltd Edition, 30th anniversary issue, inner) ..... **£5**

## ALBUMS

94 Creation CRELP 169 **DEFINITELY MAYBE** (2-LP, postcard, gatefold sleeve) ..... **£160**

95 Creation CRELP 189 **(WHAT'S THE STORY) MORNING GLORY?** (2-LP, tri-fold sleeve, black inners, postcard) ..... **£160**

97 Creation (no cat. no) **BE HERE NOW** (LP, mail-order 12" box set, with The Making Of Be Here Now booklet, 1000 only) ..... **£200**

97 Creation (no cat. no) **BE HERE NOW** (CD, mail-order 12" box set, with The Making Of Be Here Now booklet, 1000 only) ..... **£50**

97 Creation CRELP 219 **BE HERE NOW** (2-LP, gatefold) ..... **£110**

98 Creation CRELP 241 **THE MASTERPLAN** (2-LP, gatefold) ..... **£150**

98 Creation CRELX 241 **THE MASTERPLAN** (LP as 7 x 10" 45RPM vinyl, slipcase) ..... **£190**

00 Big Brother RKID LP 005 **FAMILIAR TO MILLIONS** (3-LP, Limited Edition, tri-fold sleeve, 1000 only) ..... **£300**

00 Big Brother RKID LP 002 **STANDING ON THE SHOULDER OF GIANTS** (LP, 12" x 12" insert, gatefold) ..... **£60**

02 Big Brother RKID LP25 **HEATHEN CHEMISTRY** (2-LP, booklet, gatefold) ..... **£70**

05 Big Brother RKID LP30X **DON'T BELIEVE THE TRUTH** (LP, numbered art print, gatefold) ..... **£80**

06 Big Brother RKID LP36 **STOP THE CLOCKS** (3-LP, box set) ..... **£150**

08 Big Brother RKIDLP51 **DIG OUT YOUR SOUL** (2-LP Limited Edition, gatefold) ..... **£25**

08 Big Brother RKIDBOX 51 **DIG OUT YOUR SOUL** (LP as 4 x 12", CD, DVD boxed set) ..... **£50**

09 Big Brother RKIDBOX 58 **LP BOX SET** (8-LP, numbered, 1,500 only, 12" x 12" inserts) ..... **£450+**

10 Big Brother RKIDLP66 **TIME FLIES 1994-2009** (5-LP box set, compilation, 12" x 12" booklet) ..... **£250**

21 Big Brother RKIDLP98 **KNEBWORTH 1996** (3-LP, tri-fold sleeve) ..... **£30**

21 Big Brother RKID98BOX **KNEBWORTH 1996** (Super Deluxe Box set, 2-CD, 3-LP, 2-Cassette, 3-DVD, memorabilia) ..... **£110**

## ALBUMS: LP REISSUES

09 Big Brother RKIDLP 006X **DEFINITELY MAYBE** (2-LP, reissue) ..... **£60**

09 Big Brother RKIDLP 007X **(WHAT'S THE STORY) MORNING GLORY?** (2-LP, reissue) ..... **£50**

09 Big Brother RKIDLP 008X **BE HERE NOW** (2-LP, reissue) ..... **£50**

09 Big Brother RKIDLP 009X **THE MASTERPLAN** (2-LP, reissue) ..... **£40**

09 Big Brother RKIDLP 002X **STANDING ON THE SHOULDER OF GIANTS** (LP, reissue) ..... **£30**

09 Big Brother RKIDLP 25X **HEATHEN CHEMISTRY** (2-LP, reissue) ..... **£30**

09 Big Brother RKIDLP30XX **DON'T BELIEVE THE TRUTH** (LP, double-sided insert, reissue) ..... **£20**

09 Big Brother RKIDLP51X **DIG OUT YOUR SOUL** (2-LP, reissue) ..... **£25**

14 Big Brother RKIDLP70BOX **DEFINITELY MAYBE** (Box set, 3-CD, 2-LP, 7" and booklet) ..... **£160**

16 Big Brother KIDLP85BOX **BE HERE NOW** (Box set, 3-CD, 2-LP, 12" white label, exclusive 7", book, postcard set) ..... **£160**

16 Big Brother KIDLP009 **THE MASTERPLAN** (2-LP, reissue of 2009 version, 180g vinyl) ..... **£30**

18 Big Brother RKIDLP30XX **DON'T BELIEVE THE TRUTH** (LP, 180g reissue) ..... **£18**

19 Big Brother RKIDLP70C **DEFINITELY MAYBE** (2-LP, reissue, Ltd Edition, silver vinyl, gatefold) ..... **£50**

19 Big Brother RKIDLP70PD **DEFINITELY MAYBE** (2-LP, reissue, Ltd Edition, picture discs with obi strip) ..... **£60**

20 Big Brother RKIDLP73PD **(WHAT'S THE STORY) MORNING GLORY?** (2-LP, picture discs with obi strip) ..... **£60**

23 Big Brother BLOOD239 **THE MASTERPLAN** (2-LP, numbered 'Zoetrope' picture discs with obi strip) ..... **£40**

## mint imperials

### What are Britpop records worth in 2024?

**By Daryl Easlea**

Whether a 'cor blimey collector' or a 'mad fer it music magpie', Britpop is a decent area for acquisition. In the forthcoming *Rare Record Price Guide* (out October, [Brit]pop pickers), the big three – Oasis, Blur and Pulp – all command solid prices. First-pressing LPs of these three, and many others, exchange hands for three-figure sums – due mainly to the fact that so few were pressed at the time. As John Coleman has already explored Blur and Oasis prices in this feature, what else is there?

### THE BIG THREE ARE A SOUND INVESTMENT

Original pressings of Pulp's albums remain a safe bet – their holy trinity is a sound investment: *His'n'Hers* has risen to, and *This Is Hardcore* remains at £150 in the new price guide. The big daddy here is a fully intact copy of *Different Class*, complete with its six 12 x 12 double-sided picture inserts. Due to the width of the aperture of the sleeve that housed them, to find an untorn one today is becoming increasingly rare – hence the £300 price point – however, it has changed hands for much more. Test pressings of Suede's scrapped debut single, Be My God, are valued at £150, and *Dog Man Star*, their difficult second album, is £100 with its poster. Supergrass, too, have a welter of appetising prices, and like Blur, it is a compilation that is a tasty proposition. Although Blur's *Best Of* on vinyl is valued at £200+, *Supergrass Is 10* – a double clear 10" in its gatefold sleeve containing some of the best pop songs of the era – can be found for £80. The double 10" was also deployed for Sleeper's second album *The It Girl*, which, complete with tour book, is a solid £30+, as is their debut album, *Smart*, with its free 7".

This is the very tip of the Sugar-Coated Iceberg (were the Lightning Seeds Britpop? – discuss). Like the 60s, the era that Britpop so evoked, these were records bought to be played, and taken to many a beer-sodden house rave. Thus, mint condition copies can be extremely hard to locate.

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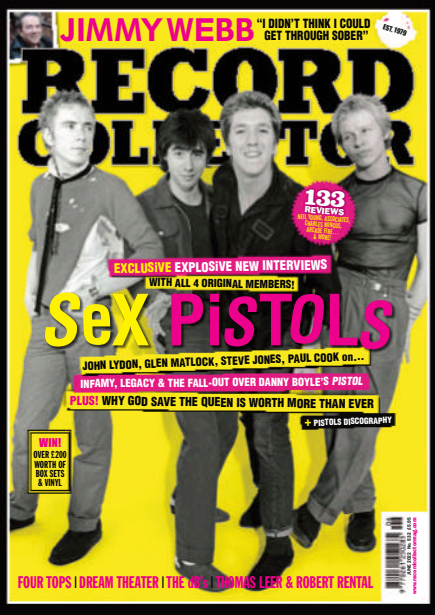

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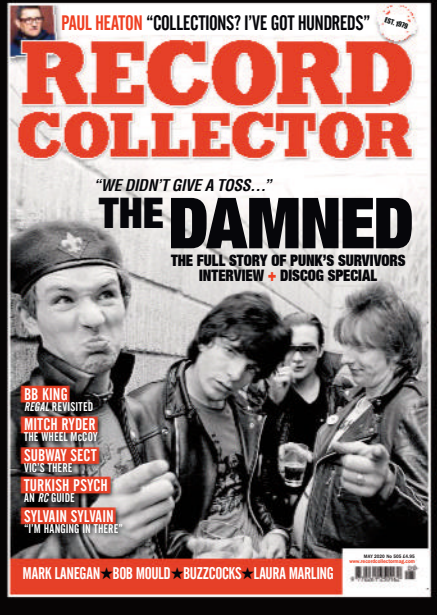

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# From The Vaults

## Reissues, remasters and compilations

# Alien Invasion

***Ziggy*-era demos, outtakes and early Spiders live recordings find an artist approaching escape velocity. *By Jason Draper***

## David Bowie

Rock'n'Roll Star!

★★★★

*Parlophone 5054197623509*

*(5CD/Blu-ray, LP)*

***Rock'n'Roll Star!* presents the live evolution of Bowie and the Spiders**

"So long 60s," Bowie sings on the song of the same name that opens this collection of *Ziggy Stardust*-era demos, outtakes and live recordings. "I'll kick you in the ass, you rascal, you." It's a deceptively playful threat from a man who was about to boot the decade into oblivion. Even an acoustic sketch such as this carries unlikely traces of the electrifying reinvention that was just around the corner. Recorded in a hotel room in February 1971, the song sports the verse melody of Moonage Daydream, although the surviving "keep your mouth shut" lyric would be put to more predatory use in the mouth of Bowie's mama-papa space invader.

The first disc of *Rock'n'Roll Star!* is full of fascinating glimpses such as these: Bowie the *Hunky Dory* troubadour willing himself into era-defining rock icon. "Tryin'a get it on with the nation/Maybe I could change the world/And I could tell them that I tried" he sings with almost dewy-eyed yearning on a formative Star, whose handclaps and self-recorded backing vocals make it sound more like a try-out for an "I Want" song down the local am-dram society than the image-building statement of intent it would become in its final incarnation. But want he did, and if a Starman demo finds "cosmic people" letting "all the astral in" in a way that hasn't quite said so long to late-60s hippie babble, the opening chords to Ziggy Stardust – even on acoustic guitar, and with decades of familiarity to today's ears – still sound purpose-built for ushering in a new rock epoch.

While, as recorded with the yet-to-be-christened Spiders From Mars – Mick Ronson on guitar, Trevor Bolder on bass and Woody Woodmansey on drums – these songs would ultimately stick a rocket booster up the arse of Bowie's career, listening to them in this early form is a reminder that, setting all the character-play aside, the David Bowie of the very early 70s was a thoroughly polite man with a thoroughly clear vision of where he wanted to be. After strumming his way through Soul Love and mouth-parping a guide sax solo, he leaves a courteous if detailed voice note to Ronson – who had so elevated *Hunky Dory*'s Life On Mars? with his cinematic string arrangement – requesting a change from "the usual violin line-up" in favour of a five-part saxophone section "doing very soft, sweet background work all the way through". Almost as an afterthought, he adds, "I've also put Moonage Daydream in the box… But can we do it in – hold on –"

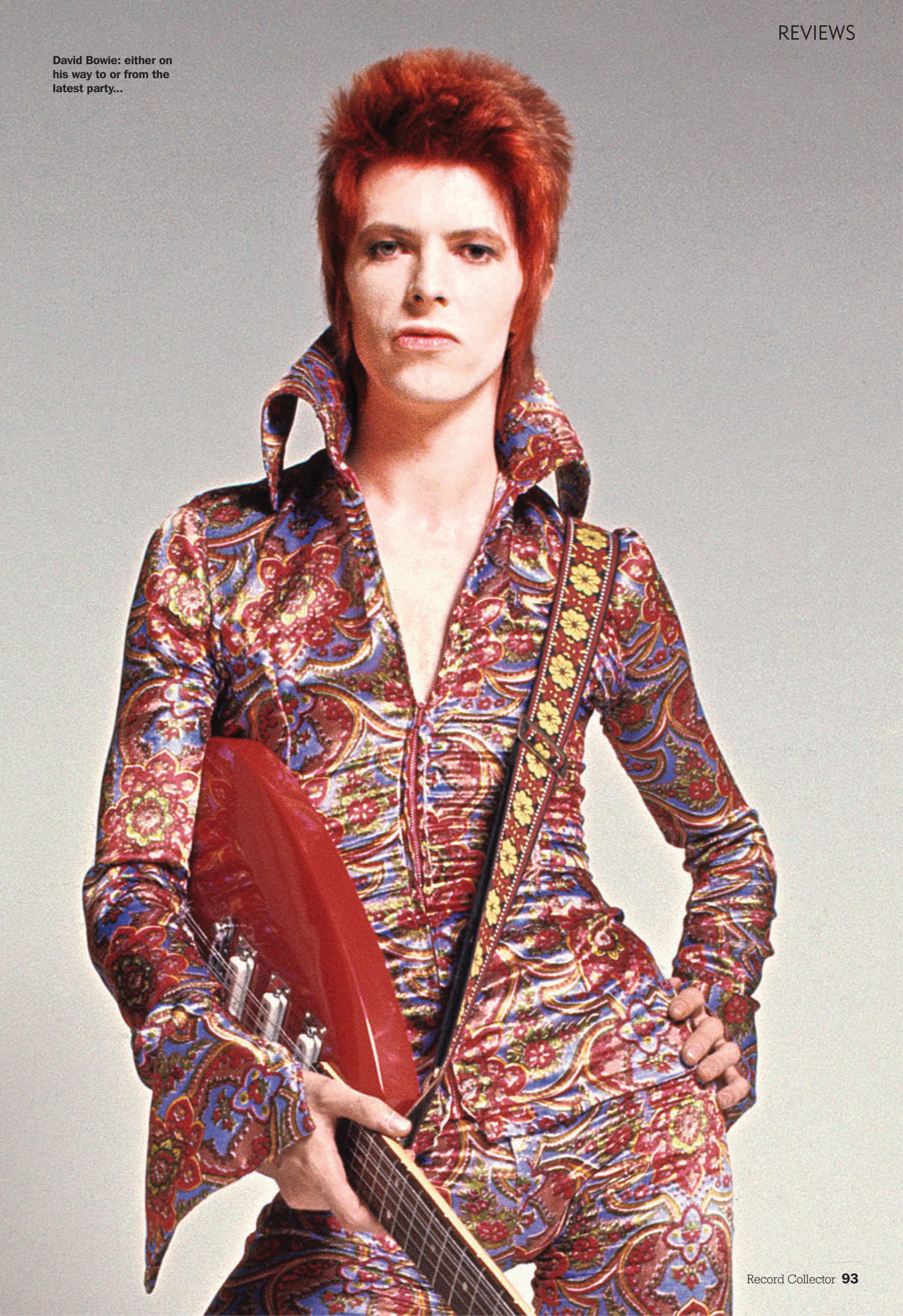
Never mind that the tape cuts out. An instrumental mix from 2003 reveals all you need to know: baritone sax and recorder make for unlikely bedfellows in the middle-eight, out of which bloom heavenly strings forced to hold their own against Ronson's ray-gun guitar solo, the two winding around each other as if Ronson were doing intergalactic battle with himself. And, in a way, that's the crux of *Rock'n'Roll Star!*: how the whole Ziggy thing went from black-and-white draft to full-colour rock theatre – and, implicitly, how it took a carefully selected cast of musicians to help Bowie get there.

Included in the *Divine Symmetry* box set of 2022 was a thrilling live show, recorded at Friars Aylesbury on 25 September 1971, during which you could hear Bowie transform from nervous singer-songwriter to confident leading man in real time. What we wouldn't give for a quality recording of his performance at the same venue a little over four months later, debuting *Ziggy* material. In lieu of that, *Rock'n'Roll Star!* presents the live evolution of Bowie and the Spiders, from bashing their way through rehearsals in Bowie's Haddon Hall home, in November 1971, to selections from a scrapped live album, recorded at Boston Music Hall in October 1972. Virtually taking up residency at the BBC through the first half of that year, the Spiders made a string of *Sounds Of The 70s* appearances, growing into the *Ziggy* songs with each passing month. Most of these performances featured on the 2002 collection, *Bowie At The Beeb*, although the 11 January recording, made a little over two weeks before the Friars unveiling, finds Bowie, standing in for a last-minute cancellation, filling the studio as if there could have been no other alternative. Yet there are glimmers of uncertainty: "That OK?" he asks after closing the 8 February taping with a commanding Five Years, sounding light years away from the, "It's the last show that we'll ever do" mic-drop of fewer than 18 months later.

In the summer of 1971, Bowie had shared a Beeb billing with "And Friends", allowing others to sing his songs as he toyed with the idea of being a Svengali. As the short-lived Arnold Corns side-project shows, letting other people front his ideas wasn't going to cut it anymore. Voiceless clothes horse Freddie Burretti had the face, but that's Bowie on the mic, straining his vocals in a fooling-no-one disguise on the rare single pairing of Moonage Daydream and Hang Onto Yourself, here bolstered by an unreleased Arnold Corns take on Looking For A Friend, its Stonesy rattle made muscular back-alley strut by the time the Spiders attempt it during the *Ziggy* album sessions.

He may have been waving goodbye to the 60s, but further studio outtakes tussle with the vintage tunes Bowie held in such high regard: unreleased song It's Gonna Rain Again is a Bo Diddley beat with Bob Dylan-lite lyrics; an early Hang On To Yourself finds him slipping into the comfort zone of his Anthony Newley mannerisms; a surprise cover of I Can't Explain has more crunch than the version he would record for *Pin Ups*, and suggests that Bowie was still at this stage more fanboy than rock messiah. It would take crowd adulation to complete the transformation – and he knew it. There's a reason the *Ziggy* album ended with cries of "Gimme your hands!", Bowie manipulating his audience into position even as he placed himself out of reach.

In showing the workings behind the most important transformation of his career, *Rock'n'Roll Star!* underscores just what a remarkable thing Bowie achieved: this is the mortal man behind the extraterrestrial dressing, and it's no less compelling for that. Filtering his understanding of rock tropes and the machinations of fame into a postmodern commentary on both, and topping it off with a glam-era flourish, was the masterstroke that wrote its own legend. The children would lose it to an almost frightening degree.



David Bowie: either on his way to or from the latest party...

# JAZZ COLLECTOR

By Charles Waring

Renowned for his deafening drum solos, volatile temperament, and ruling his sidemen with a razor-sharp tongue and unflinching iron grip, Brooklyn-born **BUDDY RICH** was a larger-than-life character whose reputation as a virtuoso musician transcended the confines of the jazz world. Celebrating his unique artistry are three, very contrasting, CD releases. ***Trios*** (★★★ **Wienerworld**) is the most revelatory, where Rich, whose forte was big band drumming, can be heard playing entirely with brushes in a pared-down three-man unit. The album spotlights a hitherto underappreciated quality in his musical armoury: subtlety. In stark contrast, ***Birdland*** (★★★★ **Wienerworld**) is a more typically brash Rich offering; a high-voltage live big band album whose title track is an exciting revamp of the famous Weather Report tune. The third album, ***Lost Tapes*** (★★★ **Wienerworld**) is a live-in-the-studio session recorded in 1985 two years before Rich's death at 67. It's a loud, energetic, rumbustious set that encapsulates Rich's genius as an irrepressible swinging big band tub-thumper.

**MAX ROACH** was a drummer with a different approach, using his instruments as an orchestral palette to paint percussion pictures. An important bebop architect who played with Parker and Gillespie, Roach was also a vociferous Civil Rights activist. Arguably his most politically charged album was 1960's ***We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite*** (★★★★★ **Candid**), reissued on vinyl. With lyrics by Oscar Brown Jr, Roach created a potent suite-form commentary on the black experience during the Civil Rights era. Singer Abbey Lincoln (Roach's then-wife) is imperious, her plaintive vocals expressing both suffering and joy. Roach and Lincoln appeared in an *ad hoc* jazz supergroup alongside saxophonist Eric Dolphy, trumpeter Roy Eldridge, and drummer Jo Jones on the excellent ***Newport Rebels*** (★★★★ **Candid**). The album's title references the fact the contributing musicians launched a rival jazz festival to the official main one in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1960, protesting against the way younger, mostly black, musicians were offered less money to perform.

Also part of the Newport Rebels, bassist, composer, and firebrand **CHARLES MINGUS** made several albums for jazz writer Nat Hentoff's Candid label. ***Incarnations*** (★★★★ **Candid**) is a superb-sounding vinyl compilation of previously unheard Candid tracks dating from 1960, which include outtakes from the Newport Rebels sessions featuring Dolphy and Eldridge, who, despite their seemingly opposing styles – one progressive, the other swing-based – find mutual understanding in the tracks R&R and Body & Soul.

One of the landmark jazz albums of 1959, **BILL EVANS'** second LP ***Everybody Digs Bill Evans*** (★★★★★ **OJC/Riverside**), now mastered in mono by Kevin Gray as a limited-edition release, established the bespectacled New Jersey pianist as a force to be reckoned with. Accompanied by bassist Sam Jones and a largely subdued Philly Joe Jones, Evans crafted a unique aesthetic, defined by its delicate, pastel-hued romanticism. The solo piano track, the serenely blissful Peace Piece, encapsulates Evans' genius. No jazz record collection would be complete without this epochal work.

The fact that **THE 3 SOUNDS** – who recorded over twenty albums for Blue Note – have not yet featured in the iconic jazz label's recent Tone Poet and Classic Album Series reissues tells you how much this fantastic group has been overlooked. ***Four Classic Albums*** (★★★★ **Avid**), offers a vivid reminder of how the trio, led by the brilliant pianist Gene Harris, mastered groove-based soul jazz.

A female Japanese pianist who played alongside Lester Bowie and Dave Liebman, Osaka-born **AKI TAKASE** began her career in the late 70s. She played with her trio at the Berlin Jazz Festival in 1981, where ***Song for Hope*** (★★★★ **BBE**) was recorded. With its rhythmic ebb and flow, the memorable title track is both lyrical and forceful, highlighting Takase's dynamic approach to the piano. Released the same year was another Japanese jazz cult classic, ***Watarase*** (★★★★ **WeWantSounds**), a riveting solo recital by pianist **FUMIO ITABASHI**, who blends a reflective pastoral delicacy with fortissimo explosions of sounds. The stunning free-flowing title track, earthy yet spiritually inclined, encapsulates Itabashi's penchant for dramatic contrasts in tone and texture.

There are many offbeat curios in **SUN RA**'s voluminous catalogue but ***Excelsior Mill*** (★★★ **Modern Harmonic**) is undoubtedly one of the kookiest. It's a live solo recital by Ra demonstrating his prowess on the Wurlitzer pipe organ, conjuring a galaxy and sounds and tones, from the hair-raisingly spooky to the sublimely numinous. It's mastered by Kevin Gray, so the sound is top-notch. With a discography of over 100 albums, "prolific" is **DAVID MURRAY**'s middle name. The veteran Californian tenor saxophonist (and occasional bass clarinetist), now a year shy of his 70th birthday, returns with the excellent straight-ahead outing ***Francesca*** (★★★★ **Intakt**), where he leads a finely-tuned quartet comprising pianist Marta Sanchez, bassist Luke Stewart, and drummer Russell Carter.

Another jazz warhorse who continues to soldier on is the prolific 80-year-old pianist **KENNY BARRON**, whose credits include Dizzy Gillespie, Joe Henderson, and Elvin Jones. His latest opus is ***Beyond This Place*** (★★★★ **Artwork/PIAS**), spotlighting saxophonist Immanuel Wilkins and veteran vibraphonist Steve Nelson. Highlights range from Tragic Magic, a blithely swinging bop number featuring Nelson's vibes to the gentle Innocent, showcasing Wilkins' lithe melodic sorcery.

Like Barron, whose previous album *The Source* was a solo piano recording, fellow American keyboardist **FRED HERSCH**, who adopts a more impressionistic approach to his instrument, elects to go it alone with ***Silent, Listening*** (★★★★ **ECM**), an impeccably produced, gorgeous-sounding collection recorded in Lugano that blends original material with standards.

Another US pianist, **BRAD MEHLDAU**, is renowned for his genre-hopping versatility and virtuosity. Emphasising his classical music roots – both the baroque and romantic styles – are two new lone piano albums, ***After Bach II*** (★★★★ **Nonesuch**) and ***Après Fauré*** (★★★★ **Nonesuch**), where he juxtaposes self-composed material alongside interpretations of some of the German and French composers' pieces.

You'll find classical music elements, too, in saxophonist/composer **TIM GARLAND**'s ambitious ***Moment Of Departure*** (★★★★ **Ubuntu**), a kaleidoscopically varied opus that includes music inspired by Italian composer Vivaldi and a self-penned violin concerto where he conducts the Britten Sinfonia called The Forever Suite, spotlighting the virtuosity of British fiddler Thomas Gould.

Finally, ***Aldebaran*** (★★★★★ **Stunt**), the eagerly anticipated new album by **KATHRINE WINDFELD**, looks certain to add further lustre to the Danish pianist/composer's stellar reputation. Highly skilled in writing for large ensembles, here, the award-winning Dane focuses on material for her sextet, but the arrangements are such that they often create the illusion of a much bigger group. Undoubtedly Windfeld's most consequential recording yet.

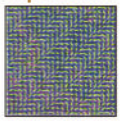
## Animal Collective

Merriweather Post Pavilion

★★★★

*Domino WIGLP 216 X (2LP)*

**Experimental rock finery**



Everything Animal Collective had promised over the intervening decade, they delivered on their ninth album, finding a perfect balance between the personal (flesh/blood/emotions) and impersonal (technology/abstraction). If *Merriweather Post Pavilion* screamed 21st Century, it was also sufficiently 'pop' to cross over, winning them a new audience. The machines may have won out on the non-stop underwater carousel of In The Flowers and the industrial wheeze of Summertime Clothes but on Bluish and No More Runnin they re-emerged ensouled in a drifting melancholic haze. Then there was Brother Sport, where everything coalesced in an ecstatic slice of dancefloor mania. This luxuriously packaged reissue comes in coloured vinyl and features an additional 10" – a version of My Girls b/w From A Beach, a BBC session track.

*Johnnie Johnstone*

## Kenny Burrell & John Coltrane

Kenny Burrell & John Coltrane

★★★★

*Craft/New Jazz CR 00720 (LP)*

**All analogue reissue**

John Coltrane and Kenny Burrell went way back, first playing together in 1951 in the Dizzy Gillespie band, but this was the first and only release with them as co-leaders. Coltrane came into this March 1958 session on a hot streak – the new year had seen him record his own *Lush Life* and *Soultrane*, not to mention Miles Davis' *Milestones*. Here he and guitarist Burrell were backed by a dream team of Paul Chambers (bass), Jimmy Cobb (drums), and Tommy Flanagan (piano). The session catches the two leaders at a point where their styles are drifting apart – Coltrane increasingly untethered and urgent; Burrell a study in measured eloquence. It works a treat, particularly as they duet on a delicate Why Was I Born? Mastered from the original tapes and pressed on 180-gram vinyl, it's a reissue that does the players justice and then some.

*Jamie Atkins*

## Marc Bolan & T.Rex

Zinc Alloy and The Hidden Riders Of Tomorrow

★★★★★

*Demon DEMREC 1171 (LP)*

**50th anniversary of glam trailblazer's unearthly outlier**

Still one of the most misunderstood and insufficiently acclaimed albums of all time, Bolan's wild-eyed attempt to pause the T.Rex sound and reinvent himself as a prophet of cosmic soul and gospel remains a giddy treat. Here arriving on "zoetrope picture disc", the 1974 release should have been hailed as visionary, coming as it did prior to Bowie's plastic soul. Instead, fairweather fans and flighty critics just shrugged at its strangeness. Perhaps surefire sex-drenched hit Venus Loon might have been the single, instead of the heroic kamikaze crucifixion pose that was Teenage Dream. The album's second half is an astonishing flood of Visconti strings, Gloria Jones' helium-high interjections and crazed lyrical and guitar

flurries which only Bolan could pull off. Interstellar. *Chris Roberts*

## Can
Can Live In Aston 1977
★★★★
*Future Days/Mute FDSPOON 67 (2CD, 2LP)*
**Formula-disrupting fifth in live series**

In retrospect, witnessing Can's supernova Damo Suzuki incarnation in 1973 spoiled this writer for line-ups that followed, particularly on this UK tour with Holger Czukay reduced to "waveform radio and spec. sounds" as Traffic bassist Rosko Gee gamely infiltrated the original quartet's tight-knit telepathy. The critically lambasted *Saw Delight* album didn't help but, hearing this line-up again readjusts it as another intriguing phase in Can's 10-year story. Four long pieces start with a jam dominated by Michael Karoli's snaking guitar, revisit *Ege Bamyasi*'s Vitamin C and see drummer Jaki Liebezeit blow up a 16-minute space shuffle before the celestially soaring finale. Less "godzillas" or Czukay magnificence but still an invaluable snapshot of this astral band taking a more earthbound route. *Kris Needs*

## Cranes
Collected Works Vol 1 – 1989-1997
★★★★
*Cherry Red CRCD 6 BOX 170 (6CD)*
**Darkly magnificent art-rock from the Hampshire siblings**

Cranes, the Portsmouth band led by the helium-voiced Alison Shaw and her brother Jim, lurked in the shadows of the 90s, a reproachfully sombre alternative in the brightly-coloured decade of rave and Britpop. Effortlessly gothic without ever being Goth with a capital G, they sounded like a profoundly traumatised Cocteau Twins, or The Sisters Of Mercy fronted by Yma Sumac. *Collected Works* begins with mini-LP *Self Non Self* (whose standout track is the sinister, strident Focus Breathe), the horror-cinematic *Inescapable* EP and debut album *Wings Of Joy* (its centrepiece the pummelling tattoo of Starblood), tracing their development through *Forever* (featuring Robert Smith-remixed Top 30 single Jewel), *Loved* and *Population Four* to their Jean-Paul Sartre adaptation, *La Tragédie D'Oreste Et Électre*. Fearful, fearsome and fearless all at once. *Simon Price*

## John Entwistle
The Ox Box Set
★★★
*Edsel EDSL 0178 (6CD)*
**Half-dozen solo outings, with 29 bonus tracks**

The frustration Who bassist John 'The Ox' Entwistle felt in terms of getting his self-penned songs onto the band's albums is evident by the first four of his six solo albums coming in a burst of activity during the first half of the 70s. Certainly, tracks on debut *Smash Your Head Against The Wall* suggest they were initially tailored to slot alongside Pete Townshend's material, but the subsequent *Whistle Rhymes* and *Rigor Mortis Sets In* show more of The Ox's personality, not least the dark humour of his lyrics.

*Mad Dog* ('75) suffers from a hotchpotch of country, rockabilly and even a smidgen of disco, while *Too Late The Hero* ('81) is arguably not diverse enough and only really gets going when buddy Joe Walsh cuts loose on guitar. *The Rock* ('96) closes this box on a curious note, mostly written and sung by Henry Small of Canadian outfit Prism, and is mostly stuck in a generic FM rock rut. *Terry Staunton*

## Fanny
Live On Beat-Club '71-'72
★★★★
*Real Gone RGM-1704/5 (CD, LP)*
**Groundbreaking female rockers on TV**

Despite being championed by Bowie and being the first all-female rock band to sign with a major record label, history-making Fanny never rose above being a cult act, even though a couple of their singles hit dented the US Top 40 in the 70s, briefly putting them onto the radar of mainstream pop pickers. Between 1970 and 1975, they cut five albums but never replicated the compelling visceral rawness of their much-lauded live performances. This new compilation, featuring 11 tracks from two appearances on a German TV show, brilliantly captures the quartet's incendiary onstage synergy. Highlights include Charity Ball – think Suzi Quatro on steroids – the ballsy Blind Alley, and a superb version of Stephen Stills' Special Care. There's certainly no fannying about here. *Charles Waring*

## Keef Hartley Band
Essen Pop and Blues Festival 1969-1970
★★★★
*MiG 02842 (2CD)*
**Let there be drums... and blues!**

Bands led by drummers, Dave Grohl and Lars Ulrich apart, are seldom seen these days, but back in the blues-infused late 60s Keef Hartley was leading the charge from the back. As is soon apparent, however, the focus here is very much on Scots singer-guitarist and frontman Miller Anderson, who has played on in Germany for decades. Six tracks from the Essen Pop and Blues Festival in 1969 and seven from the following year pack a brassy punch reminiscent of Blood Sweat and Tears – making it all the more disappointing that management advice prevented Hartley and band being filmed at Woodstock. With only one selection under five minutes and a couple stretching to double figures, this is no fast-food fix but British blues at its live, raw and inimitable best. *Michael Heatley*

## Billy Idol
Rebel Yell
★★★★
*Capitol/UMe 5876923 (2CD, 2LP)*
**Punk hunk's second solo album, now with more, more, more**

Strip away the Presley sneer, the peroxide spikes, the studded leather fist and the jagged Steve Stevens guitars and Billy Idol's 1983 second album *Rebel Yell* is essentially a *dance* record (in the same way ZZ Top's *Eliminator* is a dance record). On the title track, and the likes of Catch My Fall, Blue Highway and Do Not Stand In The Shadows, producer Keith Forsey – former drummer with Amon Duul II – and Giorgio Moroder, took everything he'd learned from krautrock and disco to machine-tool Billy Idol's music into an irresistibly metronomic force for this, their second collaboration (augmented here by demos, remixes and unreleased cover versions). Of the slower cuts, Flesh For Fantasy hasn't aged well ("Face to face and back to back/You see and feel my sex attack") but the atypically elegant ballad Eyes Without A Face retains an immortal grace. *Simon Price*

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TOYAH

M I N X

**DELUXE 40th ANNIVERSARY 2CD SEVEN-INCH GATEFOLD SET**

**Toyah's first solo album Minx** was released in **July 1985** and was produced by Christopher Neil, with a musician line-up featuring Simon Darlow, and members of Mike + The Mechanics and Killing Joke. Originally recorded in 1984, this very special **40th Anniversary set** expands the album into a **Deluxe 2CD Edition** for the first time.

**CD1 features the original album** with **two bonus tracks originally only available on the 1985 cassette and CD formats** plus two **non-album B-sides**, two **extended 12" versions**, and a **12" remix. CD2 contains sixteen rarities of which fourteen are previously unreleased**, including: the **unheard album session demo "The Fight"** and a 7" remix of third single "World In Action", **two previously unreleased home demos of Lou Reed's "Perfect Day"** and **Alice Cooper's "School's Out"** recorded by Toyah and Joel Bogen in the spring 1984, two **previously unreleased instrumental demos** of "All In A Rage" and "Snow Covers The Kiss" recorded by Joel Bogen, and **eight previously unreleased backing tracks** of Minx songs, retaining their **distinctive backing vocals by Toyah.**

The two CDs are **presented in brand new seven-inch deluxe gatefold packaging.** An **8-page booklet** features **rare and unseen photography** by Terence Donovan and **Curator's Notes** by Toyah archivist Craig Astley detailing the origins of the bonus tracks and rarities.

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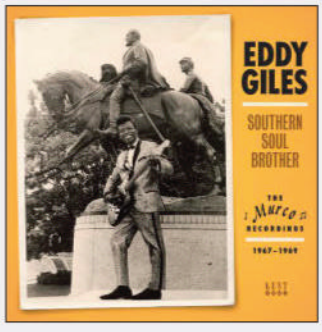
# SOUL COLLECTOR

By Lois Wilson

**THE STAPLES JR SINGERS** are a family trio who formed in 1971 in Aberdeen, Mississippi. They were incredibly young when they started – leader Annie Brown (now Caldwell) was just 11; her siblings R.C, 12, and Edward 13. Named after their chief influence the Staple Singers, with other touchstones including Curtis Mayfield and Marvin Gaye, they sung gospel and of the civil rights struggle. By the time they recorded their first album *When Do We Get Paid* in Tupelo in 1975, they had recruited Ronnel Brown who was 10. Pressing just a handful of copies, they sold them at their shows and to neighbours from their front lawn and their songs switched from deadly solemnity to dancing-in-the-aisles jubilation. Its reissue in 2022 brought a renewal of interest in them and ***Searching*** (★★★★ **Luaka Bop**) is the group's belated follow-up. Produced by Ahmed Gallab, who performs as the artist




Sinkane, it captures the original trio with rhythm section (R.C's son Gary, his grandson Jaylin, and Edward's son Troy) live over two nights in October 2023 at the Message Center, a single room church in West Point, Mississippi. It's powerful, rousing stuff.

**PP ARNOLD** sang in the Ikettes and after supporting the Rolling Stones as part of the Ike and Tina Turner Revue in London in 1966, signed to Andrew Loog Oldham and Tony Calder's Immediate label where she recorded two albums, ***The First Lady Of Immediate*** (★★★★★ **Charly**) and *Kafunta*. The first named is a classic, Arnold's voice, vulnerable yet strong, cloaked in Immediate's own wall of sound and every track a winner from definitive covers of Cat Stevens' The First Cut Is The Deepest and Spector/Mann/Weill's Born To Be Together to If You Think You're Groovy, which was penned for her by her pals and label mates Steve Marriott and Ronnie Lane of the Small Faces and northern soul favourite Everything Is Gonna Be Alright. Essential.

The follow up to the excellent *Ready Or Not – Thom Bell's Philly Soul Arrangements & Productions 1965-1978* from 2020, ***Thom Bell – Didn't I Blow Your Mind? The Sound Of Philadelphia Soul 1969-1983*** (★★★★ **Kent**) is incredible from beginning to end with high points including the sublime symphonic soul of the Delfonics (Didn't I Blow Your Mind This Time) and the Stylistics (Betcha By Golly, Wow) and the funk tinged disco of Detroit Spinners (The Rubberband Man).

**LOLEATTA HOLLOWAY**'s ***We're Getting Stronger – The Gold Mind/Salsoul Recordings 1976-1982*** (★★★★ **Cherry Red**) collects her four albums from the time period over four discs – 1977's *Loleatta*, 1978's *Queen Of The Night*, 1979's *Loleatta Holloway* and 1980's *Love Sensation* and also includes a fifth disc of remixes, instrumentals and acapellas from her Gold Mind/Salsoul catalogue. Key tracks include her No 1 Dance hit, Love Sensation, written and produced by Dan Hartman, her first Top Three dance hit, Hit And Run, and her cover of Debby Boone's You Light Up My Life, which earned her a Grammy nomination.

**JIMMY McCRACKLIN** started out in St Louis, moved to the Bay area and recorded for Globe, Swing Time, Peacock, Modern and Irma before landing at Chess where he constructed his signature The Walk. Influenced by blues singer and pianist Walter Davis, famed for 1931's Sunnyland Blues, it gave the pianist his first hit – a US R&B Top 5 and pop No 7 in 1958. ***Jimmy McCrackin – The Original Blues Blasters 1945-1951*** (★★★★ **Jasmine**) focuses on his early days as a soloist and collects together his first recordings as a solo artist and then from 1946 with his Blues Blasters who included guitarist Robert Kelton.

**NICK WATERHOUSE**, the Huntington Beach, Californian and erstwhile producer for Allah Las and Ural Thomas, started making his own gritty R&B in 2011. His vocal and songwriting skill, then rooted in the birth of soul of Little Willie John and The Five Royales, was captured perfectly on that year's 2011 self-released 45 Some Place, a raw voiced R&B stroller with an understated guitar break and fervent horns. His first album, 2012's ***Time's All Gone*** (★★★★ **Innovative Leisure**) includes that aforesaid single plus another 10 belters of equal quality, including a snaking, seductive remake of Them's I Can Only Give You Everything.

***Eccentric Soul: Minibus*** (★★★★ **Numero**) is a double album that cherry picks from 2012's limited edition 45s boxset *Omnibus*, spanning 1966 to 1980. The earliest cuts are by Two Plus Two and Majjestees. The first named led by Wilburt Jackson, a songwriter for Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell, deliver I'm Sure which sounds like it came out of the Motown stable. The second's Let Her Go is crushing harmony soul featuring Angelo Bond who later joined Holland, Dozier, Holland's Invictus/Hot Wax stable. The latest cut, A Friend by Crystal's Image, a Washington DC trio includes a transportive piano break while 1976's Patience, an empowerment disco funk by Rokk, who had connections with Barry White, and Sky's The Limit's same year's urban symphony Don't Be Afraid provide further standouts.

"Like Ray Charles, I guess I was born to lose," Shreveport's **EDDY GILES** sings on Losin' Boy, his 1967 debut single for Dee Marais's Murco label and the opening track to ***Southern Soul Brother: The Murco Recordings 1967-69*** (Kent ★★★★ which is being re-promoted this month. It's the first song Giles wrote and the song most people know him for. It's also a true classic as are the other 17 tracks he put down for the label, all included here. There are Soldier Boy blues (1967's While I'm Away (Baby Keep The Faith) featuring Charles Brown) edifying ballads (1968's Happy Man), emotive R&B (1967's I Got The Blues), satisfying stomps (Don't Let Me Suffer, here a previously unissued extended version) plus intuitive covers (OV Wright's That's How Strong My Love Is). Ace.

## Skip James

Today!

★★★★

*Craft Recordings CR 00744 (LP)*

**Resurrected blues legend's third remanifests on vinyl**

If it wasn't for John Fahey and friends' bluesmen-finding expeditions the world would never have heard *Today!* or other albums Skip James recorded from the mid-60s. Before Fahey rescued him from a Mississippi hospital, blues scholars considered Skip long gone after the records he cut for Paramount in the 30s.

Now in his sixties, James hit the studio for a third time and unleashed his spine-chillingly spectral falsetto revisiting 30s classics including I'm So Glad (later covered by Cream), Hard Time Killing Floor Blues, Drunken Spree and Cypress Grove Blues, joined by new compositions like Washington DC Hospital Center Blues; all shadowed by his extraordinary open D-minor guitar (two on piano). The very definition of the blues' mysterious dark power. *Kris Needs*

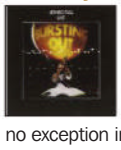
## Jethro Tull

Bursting Out (The Inflated Edition)

★★★

*Parlophone 05054197723971 (3CD/3DVD)*

**New mixes for the old ceremony**



The 70s was the era of the double live album, and Jethro Tull were no exception in immortalising their stage act thus. Tracks recorded on eight-track tape in various European locations by leader Ian Anderson in 1978 appeared on vinyl later that year and, in digital form, in 1990 and 2004. They're accompanied by Tull's 1978 Madison Square Garden show on CD (edited to fit, as previously issued in 2009), DVD audio (the full 93-minute MSG) and the surviving 50 minutes of video broadcast by the BBC in conjunction with Radio 1. A new Steven Wilson stereo mix is the bait here. Add a 96-page hardcover book and you have all the bells and whistles we now expect from the Tull reissue machine. *Michael Heatley*

## Davy Jones

Incredible!

★★

*7A Records 74064 (CD)*

**Expanded reissue of a nostalgia-exploiting artefact**

MTV re-runs of *The Monkees* in the US prompted renewed interest in the band, indirectly leading to their pretty-boy Brit singer Jones returning to the studio for this 1987 album. The contents, however, owe more to the clinical tropes of the times in which they were made, rather than the purer, innocent pop of 20 years earlier.

Synths and sequenced drums are the order of the day on the slick, soulless Black And White and opener Look Inside Yourself, while a retread of his old band's hit Valleri just about survives a similar makeover, thanks to some sprightly brass. Seven bonus tracks do little to improve proceedings, although the jazzy King Lonely The Blue possesses a modicum of charm. *Terry Staunton*

## Howard Jones

Human's Lib

★★★★

Dream Into Action

★★★

*Cherry Red PCDB 2 BRED 903/904 (CD/Blu-ray)*

**'New' New Songs**

Critics mostly disliked Howard Jones' 1984 debut album *Human's Lib*, but as ever, they (we) knew nothing because it sounds killer all these years later, specifically in New Song, What Is Love? and Jones' still-unique synth-prog power ballad, Hide And Seek. 1985's follow-up *Dream Into Action* was a shade less accessible, but it still gave us Things Can Only Get Better and No One Is To Blame. These Blu-ray reissues add a couple of extra tracks in Dolby Atmos, a 5.1 mix and two new stereo mixes, so now you can have HJ coming at you from overhead, too. Yes, some of the stuff is a bit clattery, but the melodies are inescapable and if you find nothing to love here, you have no soul. *Joel McIver*

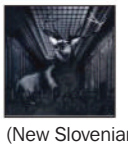
## Laibach

Opus Dei

★★★★

*Mute LCDSTUMM 44 (2CD)*

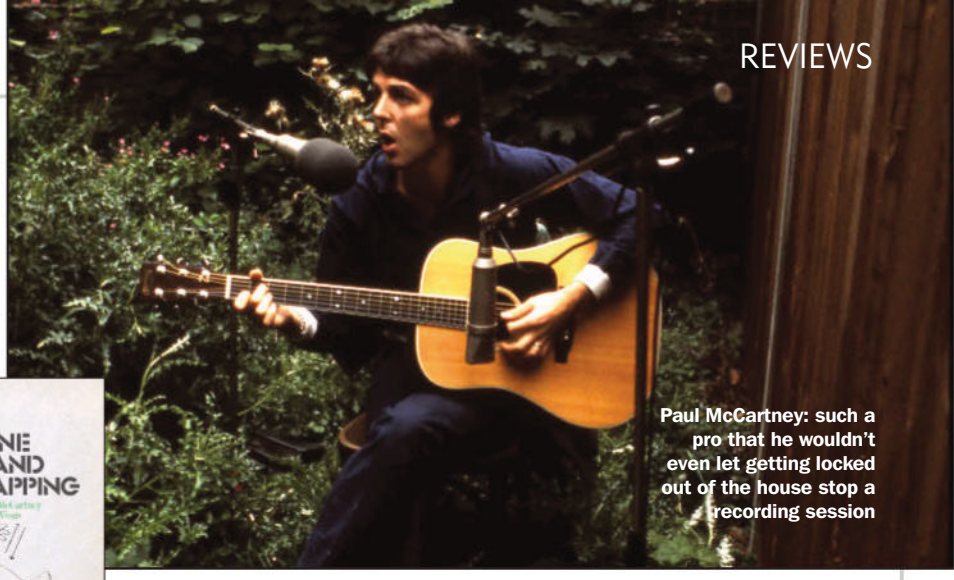
**Industrial experimentalists' 1987 debut for Mute**



Spearheading the Neue Slowenische Kunst movement (New Slovenian Art), Laibach were among the most entertaining and highly pertinent of the 80s post-industrial groups. Featured here are English and German language versions of Opus's Live Is Life and Geburt Einer Nation (Birth Of A Nation), their reworking of Queen's One Vision. With their Wagnerian airs, martial rhythms and stentorian vocals, they worried some with their possible fascistic connotations but their artwork was inspired

# Praise Be!

**Live curio finally gets a release after 50 years and loses none of its mythical aura. *By Daryl Easlea***



Paul McCartney: such a pro that he wouldn't even let getting locked out of the house stop a recording session

## Paul McCartney & Wings

One Hand Clapping

★★★★

*UMR 6508159 (2LP/2CD, 2LP+7")*

It is hard to think now that after six years of adulation in the 60s, Paul McCartney had been cast out in the early 70s as the Beatle-splitting ogre, and target of the other three Fab's barbs. His late 1973 album with Wings, *Band On The Run*, changed all that perception globally and after a feted, hit-enjoying 1974, he and Wings – now with two new members, the 21-year-old ex-Thunderclap Newman and Stone The Crows guitarist Jimmy McCulloch and judo champion drummer Geoff Britton – decamped to Abbey Road to make a video documentary. Recorded in August 1974, with *Band On The Run* at No 1 and freshly back from Nashville recording Junior's Farm, *One Hand Clapping* is the sound of a man and his band who are getting where they want to be. The film was shelved after completion, and finally released in 2010. Its graininess, interviews and commentary bordering on parody – and McCulloch looking about 11 – was a great curio, albeit in the vein of his old group's *Let It Be,* which was still viewed as the devil's celluloid in 1974.

Separated from its very in-era video, the recording – now with 12 songs not included in the prospective broadcast at the time – *One Hand Clapping* is a remarkable vignette of McCartney in transition. The rough resolution of early Wings from 71/72 is giving way to the sleek, all-conquering *Wings Over America* outfit of 75/76, but there are more than enough rough edges throughout *One Hand Clapping* make it sound real. As the band had not performed live in over a year, none of the *Band On The Run* material had been played out – and, as it was worked up as a three-piece, there's almost a tentative, experimental edge to the playing here, as if being learned for the first time. Jet is blasted through; Bluebird – with Howie Casey reprising his sax part – is somewhat unvarnished. Let Me Roll It is superb. To use Led Zeppelin terminology, it is tight but loose, extemporising wildly over a song a year old and still yet to be played in concert.

> **"Much bootlegged, the official release of One Hand Clapping is an often-electrifying listen, full of surprise"**

Of the older material, My Love is somewhat parboiled – McCulloch seems almost too in awe of his predecessor, near-namesake Henry McCullough's guitar solo to play it convincingly. Denny Laine sings a masterful Go Now, with the full backing vocal support of the McCartneys. Maybe I'm Amazed is astounding – before it has coalesced into the anthem, there is a lovely, free'n'funky version of it, almost underplayed. A harmonium version of Let It Be brings a tingle, as this is the first time it had been sung publicly since *then* – "Very nice, thank you," McCartney concludes; a piano version of The Long And Winding Road follows, and it's as if the listener is rediscovering with McCartney in real time, especially then going back to Lady Madonna – the line between past and present seemed such a divide at the time, it seemed impossible that it had only been recorded five years previously.

A solo piano interlude showcases his then-recent write for Peggy Lee, Let's Love, and I'll Give You A Ring, which ended up on a B-side many years later. In between, he sings All Of You, a pretty song never recorded. With full band together, Junior's Farm has the just-made exuberance of a newie, the band roaring through it – but the highlight is a blistering run through of Nineteen Eight Five, which wouldn't be played live until well into the 21st Century – Del Newman's orchestration and McCartney's vocal at the song's conclusion is one of his very best. The acoustic EP – recorded in the garden of Abbey Road – is great fun. The unreleased doodle, Blackpool is endearing, hearing McCartney sing about seaside resorts of north-west England. Then, proper tingling follows as he plays 20 Flight Rock, the song which 17 years previously, he'd sung to John Lennon as an audition piece for the Quarrymen. The understandable electricity of his performance offers a glimpse of how Lennon must have felt. Peggy Sue follows, by "the late, great Buddy Holly, no-one like him". This is from the man whose group was named in tribute to him, and years later would own his song catalogue. Although throwaway, it is exceptionally poignant.

Much bootlegged, the official release of *One Hand Clapping* is an often-electrifying listen, full of surprise. Although rough and ready, Paul McCartney's ineluctable creativity shines through. All Macca is here – a little mugging and playing to camera (the Reg Dixon reference after Power Cut was out of date for the kids even then); the passionate diarist of heartfelt love (My Love, Maybe I'm Amazed), and the out-and-out rock-soul shouter (Let Me Roll It, Soily). Within a matter of months, *Venus And Mars* would be recorded, and for the next period, rough and readiness would not be on the McCartney agenda for some time.

by anti-Nazi John Heartfield, their whole aesthetic a satire on the hegemony of 80s pop, stamping on a human face forever. A 16-track bonus disc comprised of live material includes a version of Trans-National, whose change of pace and velocity are authentically bracing.
*David Stubbs*

## Nils Lofgren

Night Fades Away/ Wonderland

★★★

*BGO BGOCD 1512 (2CD)*

**In-demand guitar star reappraised**

Albums from 1981 and '83 ended a decade in which Nils Lofgren found diminishing returns as a solo act. The former Grin/Crazy Horse singer-guitarist had been overtaken by Tom Petty and his ilk, and the following year would find a friendlier reception as Bruce Springsteen's first lieutenant – just as he had served Neil Young. These often-overlooked LPs are contextualised by a superlative sleevenote interview; take a bow, *RC*'s own Charles Waring! The covering of hits by Del Shannon, The Beatles and Bobby Womack suggests a return by Lofgren to musical roots. And while some of the originals sound suspiciously familiar, session ace Nicky Hopkins' pianistic contributions to the better of the pair, *Night Fades Away*, still shine. Like Nils, a top second banana...
*Michael Heatley*

## Modest Mouse

Good News For People Who Love Bad News

★★★★

*Sony 19658830281 (2LP)*

**Marking 20 years since the Mouse that roared**

Alongside Arcade Fire's *Funeral*, Modest Mouse's fourth album was 2004's great rabble-rousing album, an exploratory series of ragged anthems held together by Isaac Brock's intense hollering. Their first album to go Top 40 both in the UK and US, it housed signature single Float On, still the tightest encapsulation of the collective's communal spirit. Their Flaming Lips-influenced psychedelia was again given room to roam, but a tauter feel was present in the beautiful Blame It On The Tetons and glam romp Black Cadillacs. Eight new remixes from the likes of MGMT and Dan The Automator are only on streaming, but the original album's long deleted vinyl is back out, complete with a new pink sleeve. It remains their most fully realised adventure.
*John Earls*

## Ozark Mountain Daredevils

It's Alive

★★

*BGO BGOCD 1511 (CD)*

**Dead or alive country-rock combo from Missouri**

As this venerable Missouri outfit prepares to retire from the road after half a century, BGO reissue their 1978 concert collection. It started life as a double live vinyl on A&M and is the musical opposite of labelmate Peter Frampton's bombastic *Comes Alive.* Unfortunately, however, it seems to share stadium-rocker Frampton's over-the-top audience applause track – the music, by contrast, sounds like it was recorded in a series of clubs or even bars. The uninitiated will recognise sole UK hit Jackie Blue and, possibly, US sister "smash" If You Want To Get To Heaven, but elsewhere this is an uncomfortable mish-mash of Seals and Crofts, Dr Hook and early-period Eagles. Too many different songwriters and directions, too few memorable hooks. Cue canned applause...
*Michael Heatley*

# PSYCH COLLECTOR

By JR Moores

***Demoler! Demoler! Demoler!*** (★★★★ **Munster**) celebrates the work of Rebeca Llave whose Lima-based imprint, Disperú, was the first female-founded record label in South America. During the mid-to-late 60s, she cherrypicked talent from her homeland and the broader vicinity (Los Cuatro Brillantes, for instance, were Uruguayan), 14 examples of which appear on this comp. It's a varied but consistently vibrant collection that showcases garage rockers (Los Saicos), smoother 60s poppers (Claudio Fabbri) and those working in the tropical Andean vein (Toño Y Sus Sicodelicos). If their shakes and rhythms don't get your hips moving, you must be medically catatonic.

The potent material of **SHELLY Y NUEVA GENERACIÓN** makes it sound as though they could have been Spain's answer to Jefferson Airplane. Alas, their run at it was mercilessly brief. ***Shelly y Nueva Generación*** (★★★★ **Munster**) hosts every song from the band's rare 45s of 1968 and 1969. The vinyl's second side hosts unreleased material; mostly covers of popular international hits recited for a telly show. These include The Temptations' All I Need, with a particularly vicious vocal take from María de la Concepción Gutiérrez Lobo (aka "Shelly"). In the 80s, she would reinvent herself as the even fiercer singer for the metal band Malena y Belcebú.

Mr Destroyer was among many highlights from Monster Magnet's lockdown-era covers album, *A Better Dystopia*. The incendiary original was by Ohio's **POOBAH**. The band formed in 1972 and, notwithstanding several break-ups and hiatuses, are still going strong under the leadership of singer and guitarist Jim Gustafson. ***Burning In The Rain: An Anthology*** (★★★★ **Ripple Music**) has a non-chronological arrangement, so fun can be had guessing which songs are bona fide proto-metal brown-psych bangers from the 70s as opposed to those recorded in the decades since. Mr Destroyer itself is saved until relatively late in the running order but there are plenty of leather-clad, countercultural hijinks before it smashes out of the speakers like an acid-frazzled preacher man.

Monster Magnet haven't covered **DRAGONFLY**... as far as we're aware. They might as well have done, as demonstrated by 1968's ***Dragonfly*** (★★★★ **Guerssen**), such was the Colorado band's penchant for fuzz riffs, badass solos, walloping drums, freaky outros and downbeat lyrics. "The taxman is at your door/The dog has messed on the floor," concludes one typically sardonic number. "Tomorrow doesn't look too good/ How have you made it this far?/And your TV dinner is burning up/ENJOY YOURSELF!" Relatable stuff.

**THE SHIVER**'s sole album, ***Walpurgis*** (★★★ **Guerssen**), holds the honour of being the first ever LP to have its cover designed by HR Giger. Try not to be put off by the image of a flayed alien siren wearing a pair of massive testes as replacement sunglasses. It's a stomping affair, tickling at the cusp of prog, albeit a little reliant on the compositions of others. The Shiver do put their own slight spin on standards by the likes of Procol Harum and The Animals, however, and the vibe throughout is consistently bluesy. Please don't try crafting your own gonad Aviators at home, folks.

Way too bluesy-by-numbers are **CHILD**, not to be confused with the 70s Pontefract band of the same name who were profiled in *RC*544. This long-haired trio are based in Melbourne, Australia and aspire to fuse hard rock with psychedelia. (How novel.) Their catalogue to date is now being reissued, starting with 2014's ***Child*** (★★ **Heavy Psych Sounds**). "Every morning / I have whisky, whisky in my coffee," groans the singer in close impersonation of Paul Rodgers appropriating BB King. This facsimile of a facsimile might interest fans of other throwback acts, if we're being generous. Not sure it merits much existence when we already have superior retro rockers like Howlin Rain. "All I wanna sing is the truth," the pseudo-Rodgers continues bragging. "And I sing it for real..." LIAR!

**MAHTI** feature two members of Finland's Circle, one ex-member of that same group, plus the kantele-playing academic Hannu Saha. After two albums of abstract Scandinavian space-folk, they've done the only sensible thing and added to their line-up Sally Pilkington and Richard Dawson. As a result, ***Musiikki 3*** (★★★★ **Riot Season**) is Mahti's loveliest album yet. Don't expect Dawson's famous lyricism, mind, as he's in wordless mode on Brisahka, la-la-la-ing along to the tinkle of strings and gurgling synths. Ruskoi is a bit jazzier, near industrial in its more clattering sections. Chanted group vocals take over on Hof-falssi, before Lippa brings the LP to an ambient close.

Back in the 2000s, the road-tripping free-psych collective **SUNBURNED HAND OF THE MAN** were known for putting out tons of home-burned CD-Rs filled with never-ending live jamz. Compared to those documents, their new studio-recorded effort, ***Nimbus*** (★★★★ **Three Lobed**), is almost shockingly listenable. Relatively speaking, you understand. It's not exactly Kings Of Leon. Peter Gizzi and Matt Kreftin drop by to read grizzled poetry over kosmische meanderings. On Walker Talker, Sunburned hit a sexy desert funk groove. Ishkabibble Magoo and Lily Thin recall (and in the latter case directly reference) the more accessible end of Sun City Girls. The CD version contains three extra tracks because, well, that format's got more space, hasn't it? And as the mighty Sun Ra once preached, "SPACE IS THE PLACE!" Change this magazine's title to *CD Collector*, forthwith!

## Pallas

Eyes In The Night – The Recordings 1981-1986

★★★★

*Esoteric ECLEC 72874 (6CD/Blu-ray)*

**Comprehensive early years round-up for Scottish progsters**

Alongside Marillion and IQ, Pallas were one of the bands credited for the progressive rock revival in the early 80s, announcing their entrance to the scene with a cassette album *Arrive Alive* in 1981 and an effervescent single of the same name. Signing to Harvest, the Aberdonians released 1984's *The Sentinel*, a well-received LP which stalled just outside the UK Top 40: both the UK and US mixes are included here. Two years later came the less successful *The Wedge*, after which Harvest cut them loose. Together with a number of single cuts and bonus tracks, a disc of BBC material (featuring their 1983 Reading set and a studio session), a live CD from a hometown show in October 1985 and a Blu-ray of their *Live From London* performance complete a comprehensive and exciting package. *John Tucker*

## Freda Payne

Band Of Gold

★★★★★

*Demon DEMREC 1201 (LP)*

**Delicious Detroit soul from the first lady of Invictus**

When Holland-Dozier-Holland quit Motown in 1968 to launch the Invictus label, they signed their very own Four Tops in Chairmen Of The Board, and their very own Diana Ross in Freda Payne (though the former jazz singer was far more soulful than the ex-Supreme). Payne's 1970 Invictus debut, reissued on gold vinyl (naturally), opens with, and is named for, chart-topping heartbreaker Band Of Gold, the ultimate song you can't play at a wedding. However, it has much to offer beyond that one astonishing single. On tracks like cult club classic Unhooked Generation and the euphoric Deeper And Deeper, HDH and their team of Motown alumni create a beautifully loose, autumnal, organic sound that captures the mood of its times, and complements Payne's gorgeously heartfelt vocals. *Simon Price*

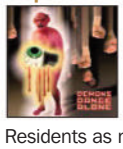
## The Residents

Demons Dance Alone

★★★★

*Cherry Red NRT 022 (3CD)*

**Cryptic combo's oblique response to 9/11**



Following the 2001 attack on the twin towers, which shocked The Residents as much as anyone else, they were disdainful of the rapid response by artists like Bruce Springsteen to produce "9/11 porn", literal and artistically worthless takes on the atrocity. Demons Dance Alone is a reproach to this. The processed guitars, almost toylike instrumentation of tracks like Neediness and Honey Bear – grotesque, cartoonish, seemingly facetious but deep seated in their beauty – match the accompanying artwork, whose twisted figurines reflect The Residents' conceptual approach to processing sombre emotions. These two CDs feature demos of tracks like Mickey Macaroni and live cuts, including a raw, coruscating guitar-based version of Caring featuring Molly Harvey on vocals. *David Stubbs*

## The Salsoul Orchestra

It's Good For The Soul – The Vince Montana Years 1975-1978

★★★★

*SoulMusic Records SM 8 CR 5221 BX (8CD)*

**Eight discs' worth of the evolution of New York disco**

A sublime throwback to the days when giving a record a 'big' sound literally meant hiring a big orchestra, New York's Salsoul Orchestra – inhouse recording arm of the label of the same name – was the world's first disco orchestra. Active between 1975 and 1982, their '75-'78 glory years under founder Vincent Montana Jr (between his walk-out from Gamble and Huff's Philadelphia-based MFSB and his move to Atlantic) are celebrated with this thorough eight-disc affair. Comprising five of the Orchestra's first six LPs (1976's *Christmas Jollies* has previously been reissued), debut albums by Carol Williams ('*Lectric Lady*) and Charo (*Cuchi-Cuchi*), and a wealth of remixes and alternative versions, it begins amid funk-heavy kitsch (*Salsoul 3001* is a disco spoof of *2001: A Space Odyssey*) but hits its groove with 1977's *Magic Journey*, home of the sublime, Loleatta Holloway-featuring Run Away. *David Pollock*

# The Blitz And Glamour

**An extensive dancefest from the influential club's chief architect.**

***By Jeremy Allen***

## Various

Rusty Egan Presents: Blitzed!

★★★★

*Edsel DEMRECBOX 92 (4CD, 4LP)*

The Blitz only ran for 18 months as the 70s became the 80s, and yet the club's cultural impact has been nothing short of phenomenal: Boy George, Spandau Ballet, a Midge Ure-fronted Ultravox, David Bowie's *Ashes to Ashes* video… none of these things would have likely existed in the form that they did without it.

Less venerated, though absolutely pivotal to the club's success, was Rusty Egan, the Visage founder, sometime drummer, and undersung electronic pioneer who DJed at the club he ran with Steve Strange, introducing the 80s to itself. Egan's tireless work acquiring recherché vinyl discs from across post-imperialist Europe helped to embed nascent electronica into the London culture, and inspired a milieu of Tuesday night hedonists to shape the charts with these oddly futuristic sounds and textures in the coming decade and beyond.

More than 40 years after the Blitz kids moved onto the next big thing, Egan now presents us with a box set of some considerable heft that should give a reasonable impression of a night at the fabled club on Great Queen Street, and it doesn't half sound à la mode in 2024. Three years of intensive wrangling over licences has led to a four-LP compilation with only a few key artists missing. The aforementioned Bowie doesn't make an appearance this time, though for anyone feeling short-changed, there's a 22-hour Spotify playlist full of tracks that aren't included for one reason or another. Nevertheless, the vinyl is plentiful, and the CD bountiful, with those assuming they know the story likely to be in for some surprises.

**Rusty Egan: just firing out some emails in between song changes**

Importantly, Egan has secured Kraftwerk for this comp: the electronic world's very own Beatles, who are famously parsimonious when it comes to licensing but who would leave a massive robot-shaped hole were they not included. As well as tracks from artists you might expect (Roxy Music, Sparks, Suicide), there are great songs from artists you may have forgotten about or didn't know about in the first place (Barry De Vorzon, Lori And The Chameleons, Don Armando's Second Avenue Rhumba Band). Moreover, there's a small setlist of tracks on the CD later covered by Grace Jones (The Pretenders' Private Life, Iggy Pop's Nightclubbing, The Normal's Warm Leatherette) which, according to Egan, Island Records' Chris Blackwell scribbled into his notebook whilst visiting Egan's DJ booth for an early Spandau Ballet gig. More proof, were it needed, that Rusty Egan helped invent the 80s.

## Q&A

**Rusty Egan on DJing at the Blitz, becoming outmoded by technology and getting shot of unwanted yuppies…**

**You spent three years getting the tracks cleared, so what's missing from *Rusty Egan Presents: Blitzed!*?**
That's why I came up with the ingenious idea of a Spotify playlist! Luckily, I'm so happy we got Kraftwerk, who are the hardest people in the world to get. And we just found out today that there's a David Bowie box set about to appear with all the tracks that I wanted. It was difficult to find a lot of records, and my memory isn't brilliant. I'd be picking tracks from 1981, which is too late.

**People will be surprised by the short lifespan of the Blitz, won't they?**
It was 18 months in total. A lot of people get the dates wrong, because it started in '78 when The Rich Kids [who Egan played drums with] split up. I knew the drum machine was going to replace me so I bought one. I had the first ever SDS-3 drum machine, minus the pads.

**Where did you find all these amazing records?**
Rough Trade used to play me everything, all day long. They'd go, "This is amazing. It's Crass! Listen to it, you're gonna love it. *NME* made it Single Of The Week." And I'd go, "No." And then I'd find La Düsseldorf from Germany: "Oh, what a track!" I'd be jumping around the shop with my hands in the air, going, "This is amazing!" and then an hour later I'd find another track.

> "Rough Trade used to play me everything, all day long… I'd be jumping around the shop with my hands in the air"

**Where would you drop Hamburger Lady by Throbbing Gristle into a set?**
The thing is, Blitz was a wine bar for Giles and Tracy who'd have a bottle of Beaujolais on a Tuesday night before they caught the last train out to suburbia. By 9 o'clock I'd be like, 'Oh no, they're still here,' so I'd put Hamburger Lady on to get rid of them. I really liked Throbbing Gristle. They had Hot On The Heels Of Love, too, which is one of my favourites.

**How was the Blitz for you, because you were always behind the decks?**
Have you ever had a party in your house where you're in charge of the music? You're playing You Make Me Feel by Sylvester or Donna Summer's I Feel Love and everyone's dancing and then someone comes up and asks for something crap, and they say, "I don't like this. Play something I like." And you're like, "Come here a minute," and you take them out of the living room; "Come here a minute," and you open the front door and you say, "Bye!"

*As told to Jeremy Allen*

# The Full Picture

**Cult favourite's early years excavated, the plot thickens.**

*By Jamie Atkins*

Margo Guryan: dive into her early work on a new box set

## Margo Guryan

Words And Music

★★★★

*Numero NUM 085 (2CD, 3LP/3LP+10")*

With each archival release, the much-missed New York singer-songwriter Margo Guryan becomes more intriguing. The late-90s revival of her sole album, 1968's brilliant chamber-pop flop *Take A Picture,* was initially met with bemusement from Guryan, who'd long drawn a line under her musical career. When power-popper Linus Of Hollywood was played it, he fell head over heels and reissued the album on CD on his Franklin Square label in 2000. As he and Guryan became close, she played him recordings of her unreleased songs written after *Take A Picture*.

The following year, *25 Demos* was released, a collection of early versions of *Take A Picture* songs and those unheard 70s tracks, revealing multiple new sides to her work. It was expanded upon twice, first as *27 Demos* in 2014 and then (you guessed it) *29 Demos* (2016). In 2007 she released her first single in nearly 40 years, the anti-Iraq War 16 Words and, two years later, the solo piano *Chopsticks Variations*. And then, nothing, until her death in 2021 aged 84.

This revelatory set opens up a whole new side to Guryan with 16 previously unreleased early songs. They emphasise her grounding in jazz, encouraged by studying composition at Boston University from 1955, where, under the wing of Newport Jazz Festival founder George Wein, she fell hard for bop.

A songwriting contract with Atlantic led to a need to demo her own material, hence the first eight tracks here, recorded 1956-58 and ranging from spirited hard bop (If I Lose, The Wise Man) to smouldering ballads (The Morning After) and bossa nova shuffles (There I Was). Guryan was no fan of her own singing voice but these performances – think the phrasing of Ella Fitzgerald and the naïve charm of Moe Tucker – are a total delight.

What's striking is how ahead of their time these tracks are. At a time when women were still under societal pressure to curb their aspirations in favour of housewifery, Guryan sings of disappointing masculinity (You Promised, More Understanding Than A Man) and one-night stands (The Morning After) with a wry smile in her voice.

What happened next reads like hepcat fan fiction: she studied at the Lenox School Of Jazz, Massachusetts in 1959, where classmates included Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry, and Max Roach was her course leader. The following years were mostly spent writing lyrics to order for jazz numbers, but the second batch of unreleased songs here – from 1966-68 – cover the period after she heard The Beach Boys' God Only Knows and experienced a road to Damascus-like conversion to the joys of pop.

**A total delight... What's striking is how ahead of their time these tracks are**

While her musical vocabulary expands to mod-like R&B, Francophile chansons and chamber pop, daring wordplay abounds. Kiss And Tell flips preconceptions of the title by singing from the perspective of the other woman, encouraging her fling to part with his partner over a piano vamp. The dreamy waltz, Half-Way In Love, ponders the joys of non-committal relationships. The Zombies-like I Ought To Stay Away From You is dizzy with lust in the face of good sense. Meanwhile, Goodbye July blends piano melancholy worthy of Vince Guaraldi with a beautifully resigned vocal.

Hearing Guryan's formative work bolsters this set's familiar material – discs two and three comprise *Take A Picture* and the 70s demos. A song like Something's Wrong With The Morning might previously have been interpreted as the yearnings of a lovestruck ingénue, rather than a sarcastic putdown of the way women were expected to behave. And now it's clear that the wit and musicality of her 70s recordings – particularly the Watergate-documenting trio of The Hum, Please Believe Me and Yes I Am, and the Nilsson/Newman-like anti-hero celebration I'd Like To See The Bad Guys Win – was present from the very start of her career.

*Words And Music* is the most complete account to date of an extraordinary talent, with surprises galore. And fans should act fast – early versions come with a bonus 10" of *Chopsticks Variations.* Thank us later.

## Shampoo

Complete Shampoo

★★★★

*Cherry Red QNTN 4 BOX 010 (3CD/1DVD)*

**Shouty Plumstead duo's hyperactive pop-punk career in full**

Jacqui Blake and Carrie Askew, two teenage fanzine writers with bleach-blonde hair, fake fur coats and blank stares, terrorised their way to the edge of the top 10 in the 90s with the razzed-up-on-E-numbers Trouble, originated the phrase Girl Power (before Spice Girls nicked it) and became the proverbial 'big in Japan' before vanishing circa the millennium. *Complete Shampoo*, cannily responding to the flurry of interest after Miley Cyrus covered the duo's Delicious for a perfume ad, does exactly what it says on the tin. Their entire pop-punk oeuvre, much of it Saint Etienne-assisted, is here, from cover versions (East 17, Numan, Rezillos, Waitresses) to tracks whose titles tell you everything (Bare Knuckle Girl, School Is Boring, Boys Are Us, I Love Little Pussy), the high point being the superbly aggy Bouffant Headbutt, whose chorus threatens "When we get you outside... you're fucking DEAD." The sound of sherbet cut with speed.

*Simon Price*

## The Spinners

Keep On Keepin' On: The Atlantic Years

★★★

*Soul Music QSM 7 CR 5214 BX (7CD)*

**Soul masters' later disco chapter**

Nobody would argue that the Spinners – Detroit Spinners to Brits – were as mighty after Philippé Wynne left in 1977. Before that, the group's association with Thom Bell delivered multiple stone classics like Ghetto Child and Could It Be I'm Falling In Love. Yet they kept on keepin' on, embracing disco with clued-up producers like Michael Zager and James Mtume. Even they were surely surprised by the new lease of life which chart-wooing covers like Working My Way Back To You and Cupid gave them. Their six albums between 1979 and 1984 are gathered on this 7CD set, from *Dancin' And Lovin'* to *Cross Fire*. It's second-tier Spinners, but the add-on of 1975's *Spinners Live!* is sublime, with Wynne winning again.

*Chris Roberts*

## Spiritualized

Songs In A&E

★★★★

*Fat Possum FP 1828 (LP)*

**Jason Spacemen faces up to mortality**

By the time he reached *Songs In A&E*, his sixth album with Spiritualized in 2008, Jason Pierce (formerly Spaceman) had perfected the art of the symphonic comedown, a hangover painted in strings, crashing guitars and world-weary vocal poetry to soothe the soul. Yet its recording was interrupted by a life-threatening hospitalisation with pneumonia and other complications, and many of these songs – the haunted dirge Death Take Your Fiddle, the hypothetical Bond theme for 007's drug rehab Sitting On Fire, the Daniel Johnson-referencing lullaby Goodnight Goodnight – speak of mortality, largely

stripped of the usual allusions to pharmaceutical roulette. Crisply remastered for vinyl by Matt Colton and with a new photographic cover by Mark Farrow, even the rare examples of typical Spiritualized bombast (Yeah Yeah, You Lie You Cheap) sound more urgent and desperate than ever.
*David Pollock*

## Al Stewart
Past, Present And Future: 50th Anniversary
★★★★
*Esoteric ECLEC 42875 (3CD/Blu-ray)*
**Deluxe release for folk-rock landmark**

Three years prior to *Year Of The Cat*'s soft rock supremacy, this 1973 folk-with-a-backbeat gem was at the time considered Stewart's breakthrough with American audiences. He was writing less confessional songs and addressing historical themes, from World War II to the prophecies of Nostradamus. In lesser hands, it'd be a series of worthy, learned lectures, but Stewart's weightless vocals and the fine playing of guests like Rick Wakeman, Dave Swarbrick and Queen's Roger Taylor allow the stories to float congenially, not least the elegant proto-rap of Soho (Needless To Say). This set includes a remaster and new stereo mix, plus an intimate 1974 live show from the Howff Club in Primrose Hill (a building which later housed Creation Records, tidbit fans).
*Chris Roberts*

## TKO
Total Knock Out – The Complete TKO
★★★★
*Lemon CDLEM 5 BOX 253 (5CD)*
**Spotlight on pre-grunge Seattle metallers**

Seattle's TKO opened their account in 1979 with *Let It Roll* ("produced by Mike Flicker of Heart fame" ran the ads), an unprepossessing slice of 70s hard rock which barely caused a ripple. Battered but unbowed, vocalist Brad Sinsel refashioned the band to be more in tune with the burgeoning US metal scene and 1984's *In Your Face* was a well-crafted album with enough harmonies and heaviness to straddle the Bon Jovi/Metallica divide. *Below The Belt* followed two years later and offered more of the same, but neither really set the world afire and not long afterwards the band were on the ropes. Bonus tracks include Sinsel's follow-up project Suicide Squad's 1987 *Live It While You Can* EP (for the first time on CD), the demos for what should have been *Let It Roll*'s follow-up and some live cuts. *John Tucker*

## Alan Vega
Insurrection
★★★★
*In The Red ITR 385 (CD, 2LP)*
**Second bolt from the Vega Vault**

With Suicide on hiatus, Vega rode a ferocious creative roll with partner/collaborator Liz Lamere and engineer Perkin Barnes as the new Millennium loomed; shouting, whispering and blood-letting stark street poetry over densely layered noise and brutal drum tattoos. As reflected on 1999's jaggedly ominous *2007,* Vega was presciently foreboding about the world the couple's son Dante would face, borne by 9/11. After his 2016 passing, Lamere and Jared Artaud fashioned 2021's *Mutator* from the huge unreleased Vega Vault that feeds this second missive (heralded by jazz-nodding single Mercy). Lashed with coruscating Bosch-like carnage, Sewer, Cyanide Soul, Genocide and Fireballer Fever rank among Vega's most compelling onslaughts, topped by Murder One's screaming grind, yet his eternal optimism remains tangible beneath the cathartic rumpus.
*Kris Needs*

# VARIOUS ARTISTS

## Arthur Baker Presents Breaker's Revenge: Original B-Boy & B-Girl Breakdance Classics 1975-1984
★★★★
*Soul Jazz SJRLP 553 (2CD, 2LP)*
**These are the breaks**

Coinciding with breakdancing going from street-birthed dance craze to being recognized by a category in 2024's Olympics, original electro producer Arthur Baker has compiled 18 key tracks spun at the earliest parties by Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash and Afrika Bambaataa that provided early building blocks for KRS-One, Public Enemy, De La Soul and thousands more. Most are established funk, soul and disco chestnuts, including Jimmy Castor, Dennis Coffey, James Brown, BT Express and the Mohawks, but there are also lesser-known obscurities including Abaco Dream's climactic Life and Death In G & A, Badder Than Evil's throbbing Hot Wheels, Spanky Wilson's brassy take on Cream's Sunshine Of Your Love and Johnny Bristol's magisterial Lusty Lady, beautifully topped with Baker's electro-minting Planet Rock and Breaker's Revenge. *Kris Needs*

**Spiritualized: prescribing a dose of symphonic excellence on *Songs In A&E***

## The Northern Soul Scene
★★★
*Decca 5876826 (CD, 2LP)*
**Rarities or mass-market? You decide**

This compilation first saw the light of day in 1998, was made available on vinyl for 2019's RSD and now sits alongside other generic collections in double-coloured vinyl guise. "Northern Soul" has always been a vague, catch-all term. And while this is an enjoyable listen, these tracks, mostly Decca-signed UK artists covering US originals, may never have been played at the legendary Wigan Casino. That said, the pre-fame likes of David Essex, Elkie Brooks and a pre-Eurovision line-up of Brotherhood of Man – check the bassline of Reach Out Your Hand before you scoff – aren't exactly the usual suspects. Had this major-label product been curated by, say, a respected name under the Ace umbrella, it might have been marketed as a rarities collection with a less definitive title. Go figure…
*Michael Heatley*

## Petty Country
★★
*Big Machine 3010087 (CD, 2LP)*
**Tennessee Tom tribute is a mixed bag**
There've always been elements of country running through the late Tom Petty's

music, and this nod from Nashville is only surprising in its lateness. The obvious parallel is the various artists Common Thread tribute of three decades ago that sparked the Eagles' reunion. Despite being executive produced by Petty's long-time collaborator George Drakoulias, it often misses the mark. Petty lyrics lose much of their personality shorn of their author-singer's inimitable drawl, so no surprise that the females get closer to making his songs their own. Dolly Parton effortlessly elevates Southern Accents to anthemic status, while Rhiannon Giddens, Lady A and the Wynonna Judd/Lainey Wilson duo also impress. Heartbreakers Benmont Tench and Mike Campbell guest with others – but in truth their work remains largely unassailable as soundalike cuts from Chris Stapleton, Justin Moore and Luke Combs underline. File under late and inessential.
*Michael Heatley*

# New Albums

## The Gospel According To John

**The boy from Michigan seamlessly melds 70s AOR with cutting-edge electronica on exquisite sixth solo album. *By Wesley Doyle***

### John Grant

The Art Of The Lie

★★★★★

*Bella Union BELLA 1594 VX (CD, LP)*

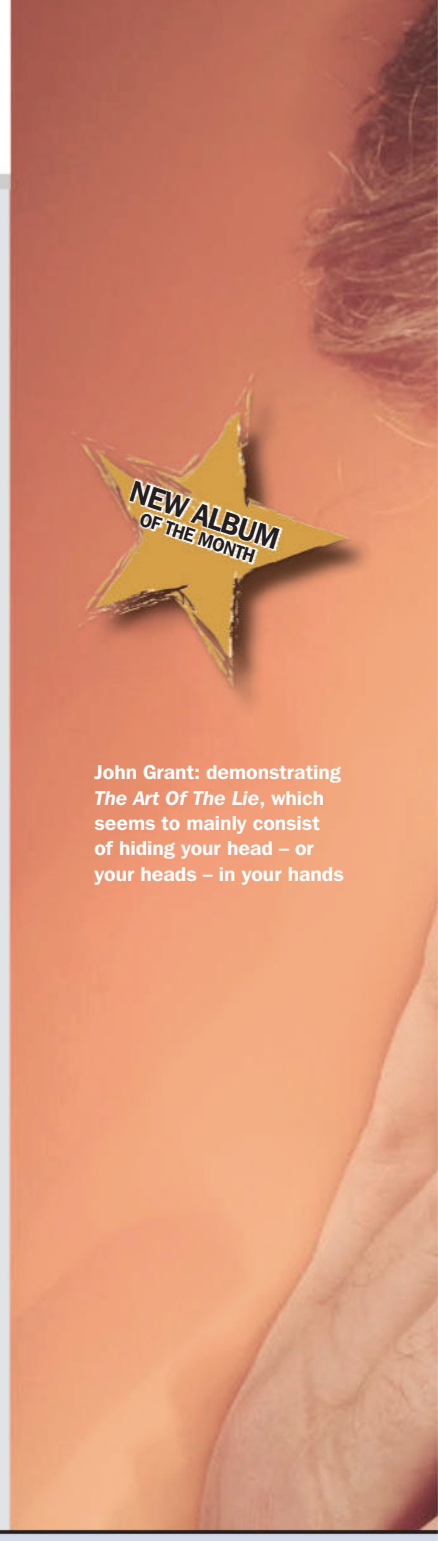
A recent study, published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, claims song lyrics have become simpler and more repetitive over the last four decades. With his eloquent and erudite new record, John Grant is defiantly bucking that trend. *The Art Of The Lie* is Grant's sixth solo album, and his first with producer Ivor Guest (Grace Jones, Brigitte Fontaine, Lana Del Ray). As always, that smooth and sonorous voice is front and centre, while sonically he and Guest revel in the synthetic sounds of John Carpenter, Laurie Anderson, The Art of Noise, Vangelis, and Yello. Working with a crack team of session players – including Dave Okumu, Robert Logan, Robin Malarkey, Seb Rochford, Robin Simon and Leo Abrahams – Grant has created his most cinematic-sounding record yet. And it moves him ever further from his 2013 balladeering breakthrough, *The Queen Of Denmark*. Electronic textures and sci-fi synths are now as much Grant's stock in trade as his meditations on the personal vs political.

Lead single It's A Bitch showcases the crossing of these lyrical and musical streams. The rolling electro funk is the perfect backing for Grant to get down to some serious wordplay, and is surely the first time the phrase "medulla oblongata" has appeared in a radio-friendly pop song. The track is something of a red herring though, as the rest of the album – opener All That School For Nothing aside – is far more meditative and elegiac.

Early highlight Marbles comes on like Captain & Tennille produced by Massive Attack, its sugar-sweet melody at odds with its tribal drums and slabs of synths. Father, the first of three songs ruminating on child/parent relationships, is an absolute heartbreaker, and will please those who find the ballads in Grant's catalogue more palatable than the bangers.

While Grant is a dab hand at sugaring his lyrical pills with soaring melodies – Mother And Son is a great example of that – there are moments on *The Art Of The Lie* when the music darkens to reflect the sentiment. The industrial Meek AF throbs away as Grant takes aim at the hypocrisy of the religious right in the US. And The Child Catcher reimagines the character from the 1968 film *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* as analogous with corporate marketing aimed at children. That song rumbles into view on lowest of low ends, before finding the mid-point between a horror film soundtrack and 1970s AOR. As with all Grant's work, the juxtaposition of his ear for a catchy melody and the darkness of his lyrics creates a unique tension, one that's sustained for much of the record. Although album closers Laura Lou and Zeitgeist find him moving towards abstraction – his voice the only human element among the machines, drifting away on a slowly pulsating hum.

*The Art Of The Lie* is a rich and dense record that rewards repeated, attentive listening. Yet despite the lyrical prowess on display, it's the incredibly detailed soundscape that really impresses – Grant is so adept at finding the perfect sounds and textures to match his words, he could easily move beyond lyrics altogether. Could an album of emotionally engaging instrumentals one day be on the cards? It's a tantalising thought. While he may be known as a polyglot, Grant is well on the way to creating a musical language all his own.




**John Grant: demonstrating *The Art Of The Lie*, which seems to mainly consist of hiding your head – or your heads – in your hands**

## Q&A

**John Grant tells us of his love of the vocoder, why songwriting is like building a nest, and how the best music is British...**

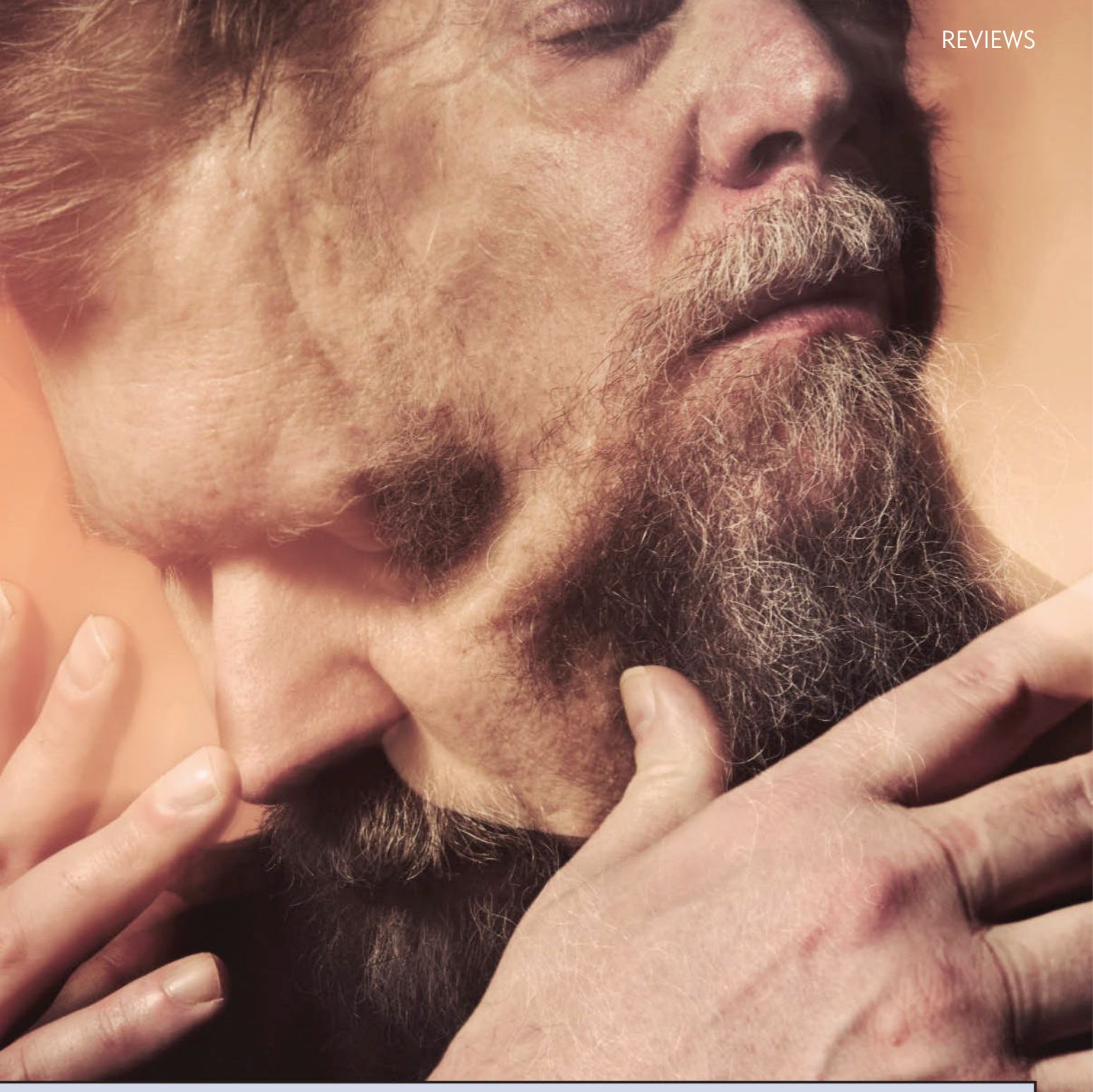
**Producer Ivor Guest is the fourth Viscount Wimborne – did you have to call him Lord in the studio?**
I didn't have to, I did it by choice! I first met Ivor after one of Grace Jones' Meltdown shows in 2022. I loved *Hurricane* [2008] and Brigitte Fontaine's *Prohibition* [2009] and those are really important albums by two of my favourite musicians. Ivor worked on both. We had many telephone conversations, and we bonded over our love for Yello and that was really important to me.

**You tend to work with different producers on each album. Is collaboration important to you?**
I'm just hoping somebody will make me good! I joke, but I do need help to get to the level I feel I should be at, musically speaking. I also enjoy interacting with somebody I feel close to and identify with, someone who understands what it means to have a vision and to realise it. I feel very lucky that I've gotten to work with so many incredible people. I'm constantly making loops and vignettes, like a bowerbird building a nest. I also tend to write down names of songs and envision them before I write the lyrics. But I'm quite scatter-brained and Ivor was gracious, giving and able to adapt very quickly to that.

> "The lion's share of the music I love was and is produced in the UK. It's incredible, this vast catalogue of indispensable music from one tiny country"

**Did you give Ivor a sonic mood board for the record?**
I did make reference playlists on Spotify – which is the Devil – to give him an idea of what I was aiming for. So The Child Catcher was as if Dead Can Dance and Vangelis had a baby, and Marbles was the Carpenters if John Carpenter was in them. The guys who played on the record just got it. There was a lot of joy in the studio.

**The vocoder features prominently, but in a really subtle, effective way.**
I have a deep love for the vocoder. I just think



it's the most beautiful thing in the world. It sounds like a robot mourning the past, yearning for its childhood, for a time before technology.

**The lyrics feel interconnected in some way.**
They're always trying to make peace with my past and make sense of my place in the world. For Marbles I was inspired by the Stephen Sondheim and Cole Porter school of lyric writing, while The Child Catcher was a metaphor for what happens when you aggressively market dangerous shit to children. We live in a world where it's good business to spend billions of dollars making sure children become addicted to products that kill them, which is just evil. Meek AF has a Nine Inch Nails vibe going on, but talks about how the new sales pitch for the evangelical Christian movement is "Jesus wants you to be rich". Donald Trump's *The Art of The Deal* is another book of the Bible to those people, so I'm basically taking the piss out of them.

**Tell us about the three songs that address parent/child relationships.**
Father is like a little Terrence Malick movie of walking through my childhood home as an adult. Thinking about the sadness of not being close to my father anymore, because he was part of the reason why I couldn't accept myself. But sometimes all I truly yearn for is to be held by him again, because I love him in spite of everything. And Daddy is even heavier because it's from the perspective of a child. The relationship with our parents affects how we go out into the world and interact, who we choose for our lovers and our spouses. Those things are inextricably linked.

**You've lived in Iceland for 12 years now – do you do you still feel American?**
Absolutely. I have a deep love for the States, and I am unmistakably American, even though I've spent a large portion of my life learning foreign languages and living abroad. The older you get, the more you realise that a lot of what makes you who you are is the place where you come from.

**Musically, though, you've always been an Anglophile.**
The lion's share of the music I love was and is produced in the UK. It's incredible, this vast catalogue of indispensable music from one tiny country. And every time I talk about it, I just feel so grateful to be considered part of the whole thing.

**It's been 13 years since *Queen Of Denmark* – have your fans accepted that the synths are here to stay?**
Well, the traditional instrumentation is still in there, and this record in particular has some beautiful playing on it from amazing musicians, amalgamated with the synths and electronics. But some journalists are still like, "Are you ever gonna do anything acoustic again?" I just tell them to fuck off.
*As told to Wesley Doyle*

Linda Thompson: playing ringleader on her excellent new record

# The Hostess With The Mostest

**Unable to sing herself, the folk icon writes a record for guests to take the vocal on… and it's brilliant.** ***By Nick Dalton***

## Linda Thompson

Proxy Music

★★★★

*StorySound 161059 (CD, LP)*

On the cover of her new record, elder stateswoman of folk Linda Thompson is dressed up in a parody of Roxy Music's debut album cover, grinning at the camera. Anyone else and you'd wonder about their sanity, but this is someone who's long shown an ability to surprise, both with music and lifestyle.

Thompson, of course, was half of the husband-and-wife duo with former Fairport Convention singer and guitarist Richard as they set new folk-rock rules in the early 70s.

But now Linda can't sing, silenced by spasmodic dysphonia, a life-long neurological condition that sends voice muscles into spasm – her most recent album was 2013's predictive *Won't Be Long Now*. It would, however, take more than that to keep Thompson quiet and so having come up with a bunch of new songs, family and friends – and what a collection that is – are given the joy of singing them. As such it's almost like one of those all-star tribute albums, except that this isn't a trawl through past glories and she was very much involved in its creation with folk-rocking son Teddy Thompson, who produced.

There's an ethereal feel, something that transcends the boundaries of folk, a gentleness yet something more, helped by the guitar of Richard. That mix is evident from the start with the sadness of The Solitary Traveller, sung by daughter Kami Thompson yet offset by a near fairground soundscape.

Martha Wainwright with Or Nothing At All is backed by nothing more than a classical grand piano while for brother Rufus crooning on Darling This Will Never Do the piano goes all smoky jazz club, with clarinet accompaniment. Curiously, the most trad folk song, Bonnie Lass, is sung by the Proclaimers.

Shores Of America has an historic transatlantic touch, the vocals of US Americana star Dori Freeman backed by mesmerising banjo and fiddle while another highlight is That's The Way The Polka Goes, a violin-led romp showcasing Eliza Carthy. The beautiful pure folk of Mudlark takes the family fortunes even farther, exquisite harmonies from The Rails – no less than Kami and her husband James Walbourne, also guitarist in the Pretenders.

Thompson keeps her hand on the reins with a considerable autobiographical feel… I Used To Be So Pretty (sung by Ren Harvieu) is a wide-eyed look at her 74 years, Three Shaky Ships, performed by another sibling duo, The Unthanks, would seem to be about her affection for her children with the chant, "Stay close, give thanks/Open hearts, close ranks".

The eeriest is perhaps John Grant singing John Grant, a song in which Thompson relates what sounds very much like a romantic encounter – a soft, slow piece, pedal steel mingling with bubbling synthesiser.

Closure comes with son Teddy and Those Damn Roches, an outwardly impish song about a fellow folk family yet in truth a touching testament to the Thompsons' moving relationship with McGarrigles, Wainwrights, Watersons and more. "Bound together in blood and song, who can break us?" asks Thompson, and surely no one can question her words…

## Q&A

**Linda Thompson talks about the power of relatives and friends…**

***Proxy Music* is, quite frankly, a mad idea – yet it works! How did it come about?**
I decided on it when Teddy offered to helm the project. The title came to me soon after – I've just heard Bryan Ferry said the first single is great, so I guess he's not going to sue!

**The cover is a world away from the heartfelt lyrics – was it planned from the start?**
There is no way in the world to look cute at my age. Better to be amusing.

**Much of the album sounds like an autobiographical compendium… Shores Of America, Three Shaky Ships and, if one dare say it, I Used To Be So Pretty!**
Yes, pretty autobiographical. I used to be so pretty. Hard to believe eh?

**Those Damn Roches sounds like it should be funny yet is actually an emotional homage to the bigger folk family. Is that the heart of the record?**
Good question. Maybe Roches are the heart of the matter. I certainly love those musical families.

**The lines, "Faraway Thompsons, tug at my heart/ Can't get along 'cept when we're apart" sound jokey but I assume there's some truth there…**
It's true of so many families. We love each other more than anything, but buttons get pressed, don't they? I toured with the family once. Never again.

> **"There is no way in the world to look cute at my age. Better to be amusing"**

**But your ex, Richard, is here for you…**
Richard plays on a couple of tracks. We split up nearly 50 years ago, so he's a bit like a cousin or something. He lives mostly in New Jersey now so I don't see a lot of him – he's still the world's most useful guitarist, though!

**And you do have an ever-expanding family…**
Kami, my daughter, does some gorgeous vocals. James Walbourne of the Pretenders, my son-in-law, is a genius. He's here, as is my brilliant grandson Zak Hobbs. My family is riddled with guitar players – would it have killed one of them to play drums?!

**Given everyone on it, was the album recorded at a distance, hi-tech?**
No, it's mainly live. We went to Edinburgh for The Proclaimers. I am their biggest fan. And we recorded John in Reykjavik, where he lives – Teddy said, "I'm off to Iceland" and I expected him to come home with frozen food but instead I got this track!

**Are you still frustrated at not being able to sing yourself, or have you come to accept it over the years?**
There's nothing I can do so I try not to dwell on it – not being able to talk is worse in some ways.

**Is there anyone missing from the album? I can't believe you didn't get The Thompson Twins!**
Why didn't I think of that? I wish they were on the record.

**Maybe for a follow-up?**
I'm just glad someone put this record out! I'm much too old to plan ahead but one of my records was called *Fashionably Late* – perhaps Teddy can pull another line-up together and call the next one *Fashionably Dead*!" *As told to Nick Dalton*

## Bess Atwell

Light Sleeper

★★★★

*Real Kind RLKND 037 (CD, LP)*

**The National protégée varies her mood**

A fan of Brighton singer-songwriter Bess Atwell's intimate 2021 debut *Already, Always*, The National guitarist Aaron Dessner steps away

from shaping Taylor Swift and Ed Sheeran's recent maturity to return to the simple pleasures: released on Lucy Rose's label Real Kind, *Light Sleeper* is Dessner's first production job in years that he hasn't also co-written. Half of these songs share Dessner's trademark mood of grandiose balladry, but Atwell's own eccentricities shine in Crowds' giddily skipping euphoria and the appropriately titled stripped-back folk simplicity in Fan Favourite. Of course, Atwell won't rival *The Tortured Poets Department* for sales. But Dessner's patronage will hopefully propel her to the Radio 2 attention such consistently insistent, early evening festival potential singalongs deserve. *John Earls*

## Black Country Communion

V

★★★★

*J&R Adventures JRA 90721 (CD, 2LP)*

**Fifth album from collective**

Releases from this Glenn Hughes / Joe Bonamassa / Derek Sherinian / Jason Bonham supergroup are infrequent – just five in 14 years – and so come eagerly anticipated. Like *Afterglow*, their third album, *V* appears to have more of Hughes' DNA

than Bonamassa's as a lot of the material – the funky Stay Free, the majestic and Zeppelin-tinged Love And Faith and the AC/DC stomp of Letting Go – could all sit comfortably on one of the bassist/singer's solo outings. But as you'd expect from musicians of such calibre the songwriting and execution is flawless throughout, Bonamassa gets to flex his blues muscles in Restless and really shows what he can do in Skyway, and it's nice to hear Sherinian's keyboards a little more upfront this time around. *John Tucker*

## John Cale
POPtical Illusion
★★★★
*Double Six / DS 178 (CD, 2LP)*
**Ex-Velvets legend still going strong**

John Cale is on a roll. There was an 11-year gap between *Shifty Adventures In Nookie Wood* and his next set of originals, 2023's *Mercy*. Now he's returned already, thanks largely to a pandemic-era bout of songwriting. *POPtical Illusion* is another engaging set that rewards repeat plays on account of the inventive electronic textures and Cale's reflective, often politically tinged lyrics. The Welsh curmudgeon is frequently downbeat and at other times angry. Case in point, Track 5: I'm Angry. That's not to say there aren't expressions of hope for the planet and its people. Most of the material is set to a fairly low tempo but then JC is 82 years young and has never exactly been Minor Threat. *JR Moores*

## Crowded House
Gravity Stairs
★★★★
*BMG 409996402738 (CD, LP)*
**No, you're not dreaming: Neil Finn's Kiwi heroes return**

If anyone would become the laureate of ageing and the accompanying awareness of mortality – the principal topics of *Gravity Stairs* – it would be Neil Finn, as Crowded House seemed born old. Songs such as Don't Dream It's Over embraced early onset middle age all those years ago; it was all very well falling in love under a silvery moon, but what was happening after years together? However, this gravitas was always underlined with playfulness, which still courses through this, the group's eighth album. Now comprising founders Finn and Nick Seymour, plus long-term associate Mitchell Froom and Finn's sons Ellroy and Liam, the album bristles with tunefulness and class. The younger element has certainly developed the sound: from the sumptuously warped opener Magic Piano to the chippy Britpop/Merseybeat of I Can't Keep Up With You and the soulfully weird closer Night Song. Highly recommended. *Daryl Easlea*

## Stephen de Bastion
Songs From The Piano Player of Budapest
★★★★
*Nomad Songs NOMAD 002 (CD, LP)*
**Songs in the key of life**

Strange one, this, but eerily beautiful. A moving musical soiree created by London-based singer-songwriter Roxanne de Bastion from cassettes and other recordings of her late grandfather, a Jewish Hungarian concentration camp survivor, who arrived here in 1947, with piano. There's a near sci-fi feel as classically-tinged cabaret pieces drift from the ether and back again, sometimes originals, sometimes newly recorded at the original piano by experimental keyboard star Xenia Pestova Bennett or, as with the echoing Vienna, Roxanne adding delicate vocals. Stephen's musings can be heard in the mid-European haze but this is far from a historical artefact – Verve/Damon Albarn keyboard man Simon Tong produces exquisitely while Ed Harcourt sings a touching duet with Roxanne on Sleep Sleep Little Boy. *Nick Dalton*

## The Decemberists
As It Ever Was, So It Will Be Again
★★★★
*YABB/Thirty Tigers YABB 004 (CD, 2LP)*
**Today's troubadours touching base with their myriad yesterdays**

After a five-year hiatus during which time frontman and songwriter Colin Meloy focused on book, animation and theatre projects, the Oregon rockers return with a ninth album, and their most ambitious to date. Presented as an old-school double album split into four thematic sides, it serves (by design or otherwise) as a thoughtful précis of the band's 20-year history. Formative indie sensibilities are revisited on the opening brace of Burial Ground and Oh No!, before a stretching of the group's loosely Americana canvas on the cinematic likes of Don't Go To The Woods and The Reapers. The album plays like a journey through Meloy's increasingly complicated soul, culminating in the extraordinary prog-like Joan In The Garden, checking in at just over 19 minutes. *Terry Staunton*

## Eels
Eels Time!
★★★★
*E Works / EWORKS 126 (CD, LP)*
**Man known as "E" casts his eyes on the hourglass**

The follow-up to 2022's crunchy *Extreme Witchcraft* is mellower and ballad-laden. Its songs are similar in spirit to the downbeat lullabies from 2014's *The Cautionary Tales Of Mark Oliver Everett*. The mood is set by the gentle opening track on which Everett explores the existential predicament of ageing. Elsewhere, too, he ponders how life flies past more quickly the longer that it lasts and wrestles with the most valuable ways to spend one's brief stint on Earth (Everett had open heart surgery last year, perhaps explaining the themes). Typically, the content gets dark in places. Over the course of 12 bittersweet tracks, it becomes clearer and clearer just how lucky we are to be around for any time at all. *JR Moores*

## Fu Manchu
The Return Of Tomorrow
★★★★
*At The Dojo ATD 029 (CD, 2LP)*
**Orange County mega fuzz**

This could be their masterpiece. To be fair, each of Fu Manchu's 13 albums since 1994 can contend as their best, given their classic stoner rock style doesn't deviate massively from one release to the next. As their first double LP, though, this has twice the potential; their magnum opus. Along with the amplifiers, the quality control is turned to 11. The riffs are fatter than Charles III's fingers. The distortion's as thick as Frank Auerbach's paint. The lyrics are purposefully unpretentious ("Loch Ness Wrecking Machine!"). The choruses largely repeat the words in the song titles. The second disc hosts material that's deemed "mellower". All that means is it's slower in tempo than the earlier tracks and still heavy as fuu-ck. *JR Moores*

## Goat Girl
Below The Waste
★★★
*Rough Trade RT 0475 (CD, LP)*
**South London post-punks maximise their promise**

After the lurching experimental vibes of *On All Fours*, Goat Girl's ongoing evolution from their pub-scene origins registers deeply on their textured, tactile and exploratory third album. Recorded across several months and co-produced with James "Spud" Murphy (Black Midi/Lankum), the result seeks out consistently unpredictable ways to express a push-pull of community and dystopian despair. The math-rock clamour of Ride Around and rueful Words Fell Out stake out its extremes, prepping the way for addiction-themed thrash cacophonies (TCNC), moody end-times laments (Tonight) and Stereolab-ish space-pop (Jump Sludge). Take It Away is a beatific balm in the melee, while Lottie Pendlebury's variably imperious, intimate voice – backed fitfully by choruses of friends, families and animals – binds the contrasts tight. "Time's wasting out," she sings, but *Below The Waste* cultivates a bracingly resourceful mindset. *Kevin Harley*

## Ibelisse Guardia Ferragutti & Frank Rosaly
MESTIZX
★★★★
*International Anthem IARCLP 79 (CD, LP)*
**Latin rhythms meet rock, jazz, afrobeat and beyond**

This collaboration between multi-disciplinary artist Ibelisse Guardia Ferragutti and drummer Frank Rosaly showcases the innate versatility of Latin rhythms. The pair's atmospheric music, often pitch black in tone, glides through multiple genres. Destejer for example, pairs Puerta Rican *plena* drum patterns with rumbling rock basslines and jazz trumpets. Ballada Para La Corporatocracia adds harsh electronic beats and glitches to Ibelisse's chanted vocals while Turbulenca combines Afrobeat grooves and chiming organs with Rosaly's tumbling drum patterns. Heady stuff that pays imaginative tribute to the duo's shared Latin American diasporic heritage. *Paul Bowler*

## Hovvdy
Hovvdy
★★
*Arts & Crafts 100144163 (CD, 2LP)*
**Folkies fluff their big moment**

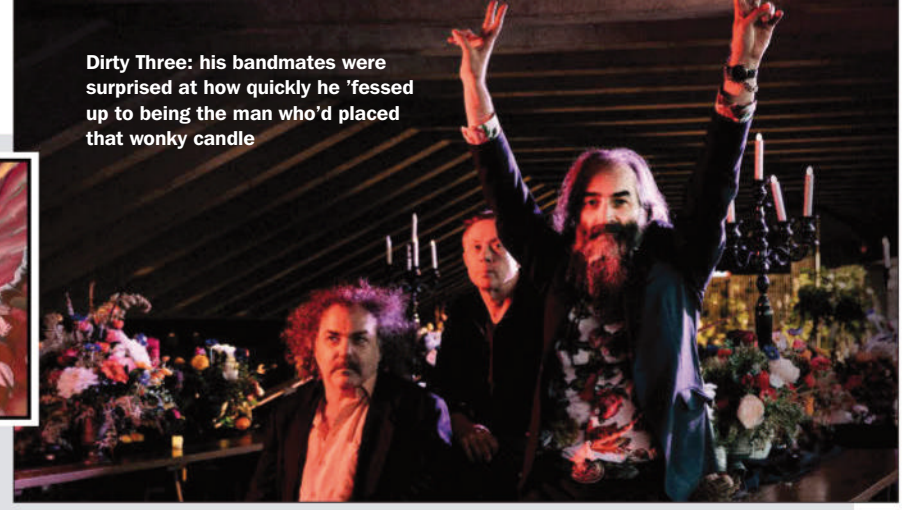
A decade after forming in Austin, Texas, Hovvdy's hushed folk has recently been championed by peers including Boygenius and Beabadoobee. Coinciding with a new label deal, the duo's fifth album could have raised their profile further. It's a strange time to instead release an unwieldy double album likely to forestall newcomers' interests. While the skittering Every Exchange and Bad News' clattering percussion bolster Hovvdy's tranquil charm, half of these 19 songs are interchangeable minimalist ballads that aren't so much sparse as rickety and hook-free. Any decent A&R could have chosen the best 10 tunes to showcase Hovvdy's intimate songwriting and melodic interplay, rather than surround them with wannabe B-sides. There's a lot to admire about Hovvdy's quiet wonder – and a lot to skip over too. *John Earls*

## Kerry King
From Hell I Rise
★★
*Reigning Phoenix Music RPM 0003 LP 1 STD (CD, LP, Cassette)*
**What fresh devilry is this?**

When the thrash metal band Slayer ceased touring in 2019, guitarist and de facto bandleader Kerry King promised us a solo album, and here it is. Recorded by a supergroup that features Death Angel's Marc Osegueda on vocals, the 12 tracks will sound very familiar if you heard Slayer's last couple of albums, just as King promised they would. The bangers are the breakneck Crucifixation, the title track and the 82-second Everything I Hate About You, all of which tick the essential fast/evil boxes, and there's a decent hardcore punk song, Two Fists. Elsewhere, there's too much mid-tempo chug to make this album fully adrenalised, but King inserts original ideas throughout: the real test will come with the next one. *Joel McIver*

# The Great Unwashed

**Post-rock royalty pick up where they left off.**
*By Jamie Atkins*



**Dirty Three: his bandmates were surprised at how quickly he 'fessed up to being the man who'd placed that wonky candle**

## Dirty Three

Love Changes Everything

★★★★

*Bella Union BELLA 1597 (CD/LP)*

Considering the events of the 12 years since Australian noise wranglers Dirty Three last released an album, they could be forgiven for returning with a bleak, state of the universe address. *Love Changes Everything* is anything but, a continuous 40-minute suite comprised of six unnamed instrumental movements forged from improvisation and alive with the intoxicating possibilities of music.

Violinist Warren Ellis (Bad Seeds), drummer Jim White (PJ Harvey, Smog) and guitarist Mick Turner (Cat Power, Bonnie 'Prince' Billy) have been making a glorious racket together for three decades and – despite the hiatus – the spark remains.

From the very start, the listener is made to feel as if they're in the room with the band, privy to an unfiltered outpouring of creativity. First white noise, like static from a wall of detuned TVs, before an imposing couple of thuds from White, Turner's guitar sputters into life and, finally a slow, drawn-out and hypnotic violin riff emerges from Ellis' corner. Over time, the disparate parts coalesce and, as the violin unravels into something brilliantly untamed, White propels them all skyward by picking up the pace.

The second and third parts are more contemplative, with skittery, wispy drums, layers of guitar distortion and Ellis picking out piano parts of radiant simplicity. Turner's guitar stirs the fourth movement into life, melancholy minor chord arpeggios that sound as personal as handwriting, before Ellis conjures vast and beautiful swathes of sound and White imitates distant thunder rolling behind them.

The storm comes to the fore on the fifth movement, Ellis plucks out a nimble, repetitive pattern as if daring the others to join him before hitting the distortion. Turner and White take the bait, piling on the intensity before Ellis breaks free with wild and ecstatic abandon. Amid this beatific chaos the album's title seems to refer to the music itself – each of the musical decisions made here are borne of trust and from nothing, teeming cacophonies of love erupt which, in the moment of creating or listening at least, change everything.

The final movement is a denouement of sorts, a 10-minute summing up of the themes of the preceding half-hour, culminating in a transcendentally noisy finale. Warren Ellis says that a Dirty Three album happens when their calendars align. Let's hope there's another gap in their collective schedules soon.

## Q&A

**Warren Ellis talks Coltrane, knowing looks and cleanliness**

**How did *Love Changes Everything* come together?**
We recorded it in about five days in 2019 in Melbourne, all improvised. Then the pandemic happened and, rather than be part of the mass expulsion of everybody's lockdown projects, we stood back from it, then reconvened to finish it. Then it took about a year to mix it and all get on the same page.

**What made you structure it this way?**
It became apparent that it was one connected piece as opposed to six separate things. It felt like there was an overarching narrative and the need to name everything took away from that. This felt more in the spirit of those 60s records by John Coltrane, like *Ascension* and *Kulu Sé Mama*. Albums that had a real risk-taking energy which was punk rock in attitude. I love that they're on this deeply spiritual journey and it's wild and violent. The first time I heard John Coltrane, I thought it was the voice of God, and I still believe it is.

> **"These musical relationships have become the fabric of my life, like family, and they're really deep and important"**

**What are your bandmates' best qualities?**
Jim and I love feeding off each other. It's so instinctive and playful, I can look over and clock a look on his face or a roll of his eyebrows and know what to do. And Mick moves in and out of that, but always anchors it, so Jim and I can do whatever we want. It's like 90s acid house when they're all off their brains, but the drummer locked it together.

**What made you choose the title?**
I put forward 'Help Us To Be'. Mick didn't like that, because of the religious connotations. He thought *Love Changes Everything* was acceptable. it's not meant to be some aphorism, but maybe it's enough to give you a way in. I'm not a hippie and never have been, but pure love has a great effect on humanity and allows us to put our better selves forward. It changes everything about how you see the world.

**How do you feel about the album now?**
In many ways it feels like the greatest summation of the intent of the group so far. We couldn't have made it at the beginning, 30 years later, all of the music we've all made has a knock-on effect. Our records document how we are at the time. We're relying on the relationships we've built up with each other over the years. These musical relationships have become the fabric of my life, like family, and they're really deep and important.

**You chose the band name when you were young men. Since then much has changed. Are you still dirty?**
[*Emphatically*] Forever dirty.
*As told to Jamie Atkins*

## Shaznay Lewis

Pages

★★★★

*1.9.7.5. Recordings ONSF 4 LP (CD, LP)*

**Still Sainted after all these years**

One of the driving forces behind haloed 90s pop heroines All Saints, the group's principal songwriter, Shaznay Lewis, hasn't stepped out as a solo artist since 2004. Now approaching 50, Lewis undertakes a second coming that shows she's not content to go quietly and become the subject of a *Where Are They Now?* documentary. Sassy and strident, spunky and uplifting, *Pages* finds Lewis coming out fighting with a full-throttle, take-no-prisoners second album defined by lush Trevor Horn-esque production values. Highlights range from the explosive Missiles, an immersive slice of symphonic soul, to the sultry groove-ballad Pick You Up. Thanks to its frank confessionals, self-help affirmations, and assertive empowerment anthems wrapped in earworm choruses and filmic arrangements, *Pages* opens an exciting new Shaznay solo chapter. *Charles Waring*

## Jon McKiel

Hex

★★★★

*You've Changed Records YC 061 (CD, LP)*

**Lo-fi wonder from cult Canadian**

Four years after Jon Mckiel's *Bobby Joe Hope*, he returns with an accomplished follow-up. With his songwriting rooted in New Brunswick and the Atlantic coast, McKiel explores a vast musical and emotional range, full of melodic and thematic inventiveness. The subtly-crafted title track epitomises his artistic reach, with delicate layers of sound powered by a propulsive rhythm and Nicola Miller's sax. McKiel and co-producer Jay Crocker perform virtually everything you hear on *Hex*, including String's complex, rhythmic webs, the fireside cover of Terry Jacks' Concrete Sea and the hypnotic groove of Lady's Mantle. As further evidence of McKiel's versatility, The Fix's gentle structure creates a serene gem and Everlee is a beautifully sculpted, folk-toned composition. A remarkable and imaginative album. *Steve Burniston*

## Sam Morton

Daffodils And Dirt

★★★

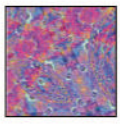
*XL XL 1335 (CD, LP)*

**Not the usual "actor makes record" affair**

Impressed by the actor's music choices on *Desert Island Discs*, XL boss Richard Russell asked Samantha Morton if she had any songs in her. The resulting diminution of her first name is because, officially, Sam Morton are a duo. Fair enough: the tricksy, skittering beats are familiar from Russell's work with Gil Scott-Heron. It's

a neat contrast to Morton's precise enunciation, as the interminable Little White Cloud That Cried shows how twee her ingenue voice could have sounded. Mostly, Morton's imaginative lyrics are given suitably lively accompaniment. Double Dip Neon is a particularly fiery workout, while it's decades since Ali Campbell has sounded so menacing as on echoey duet Broxtowe. Occasionally too impressionistic at the expense of a coherent song, Morton nonetheless races past standard traps of actors' musical diversions. *John Earls*

## Carlos Niño & Friends
Placenta
★★★★
*International Anthem IARC 80 LP I (CD, 2LP)*
**The LA scene head and Andre 3000 collaborator's latest**



Producer, composer, and percussionist Carlos Niño has been at the centre of a Los Angeles-based music scene that coalesces around the fields of ambient and electronic music, new age, jazz, and free improv – the movement was the fulcrum for ex-Outkast man Andre 3000's debut solo album *New Blue Sun*. Much like the numerous albums he has released as Carlos Niño & Friends, *Placenta* developed from improvised sessions at his home studio which then were chopped, cut up and reconfigured into spiritually rich mood pieces. The names present at the sessions signal his growing renown. Alongside Andre 3000 (here on flute) are legendary new age figures Iasos and Ariel Kalma. Among the highlights are Carla's Beads, with its enveloping synth swirls and ringing percussion, and the mellow ambient jazz of Bi-Location. *Paul Bowler*

## Phosphorescent
Revelator
★★★
*Verve 5850376 (CD, LP)*
**First in five years for Americana veteran**

The eighth album as Phosphorescent by Nashville-based singer-songwriter Matthew Houck is a thing of contradictions. Its nine simple songs, beautifully recorded and performed, might give an impression of country-hued contentment at first glance, but look closer and there are intriguing undercurrents at play. "I don't even like what I write anymore," he sings on the title track, its sense of malaise jarring against the song's elegance. It's at its best when those underlying tensions bubble to the surface, as on Impossible House, where its wry observations ("I seen your black limousine… with a license plate that just says 'NSTY'") are matched by a vital performance with an edge that's somewhat lacking elsewhere. *Jamie Atkins*

## Population : 5
Population : 5
★★★★
*Muzak M-001 (CD, LP)*
**Lush vet and friends surf choppy retro breakers**

"I don't share no eyewear, software, Tupperware, underwear," sings frontman Francisco Afonso "Xico", making his feelings on today's oversharing world quite unambiguous. An Anglo-Portuguese garage-mod-rock band formed by ex-Lush/Mary Chain bassist Phil King, Population : 5 wear a heartfelt antipathy towards matters modern on their debut album's sleeve. A surf-washed garage-rock clamour awaits beneath the B-pic sci-fi artwork, all raucous reverb, insouciant twang and tactile analogue. Sundry stops from the Stones to the Stooges and the Cramps are visited between Episode Of Violence, Peter Prank and Caravan Of Satellites, with the hint of mania in Afonso's voice making playful work of pastiche. The Iggy-esque thrash delirium of Candy proves how much fun they're having mining the past, while Midnight Surfer rides the same Cali-Morricone wave as Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack with terrifically infectious exuberance. *Kevin Harley*

## Jessica Pratt
Here In The Pitch
★★★★
*City Slang SLANG 50494 (CD, LP)*
**Subtle and spellbinding follow-up to 2019's *Quiet Signs***

Long time Jessica Pratt fans could be forgiven for double-taking on hearing Life Is, the sublime opening track from the San Franciscan singer-songwriter's fourth album. Where before there was little but space and a plucked guitar to accompany her croon, here Pratt is backed by a dreamlike, gauzy take on early 60s pop – think Brian Wilson's Guess I'm Dumb soundtracking a David Lynch film. It's more stripped-back elsewhere, all the better to showcase the timeless songwriting of World On A String and Empires Never Know. Meanwhile, Get Your Head Out and By Hook Or By Crook offer a mid-album flirtation with feather-light bossa nova and The Last Year closes the album on an optimistic note. *Here In The Pitch*'s subtle wonders suggest a songwriter in the form of her life. *Jamie Atkins*

## Samana
Samana
★★★★
*The Road Records ROAD 001 (CD, LP)*
**Welsh duo conjure up a gem**

Expressive, mysterious and creative, this self-titled album defies categorisation. Yet its imaginative blend of folk-tones and other styles has a vivid impact that's impossible to ignore. The approach is typified by the opening tracks; Into The Blue's gentle, rolling acoustic guitar beckons you in as the song begins its stately journey until the segue into The Knife unfolds another dazzling creation, culminating in a thunderous wave of sounds. At times unsettling but often startlingly beautiful, these songs have a driven intensity. With their serene vibe and stunning vocals, tracks such as The Dark Angel and Two Wrongs are mesmerising, as is the swirling power of The Infinite and the superbly constructed The Preselis. Bold and innovative, it's a fine album. *Steve Burniston*

## Strand Of Oaks
Miracle Focus
★★★★
*Western Vinyl WV 267 (CD, LP)*
**Meditation's what you need**

After the cosmic country songs of loss on 2021's *In Heaven*, Timothy Showalter returns transformed. Intervening years have seen him pursue painting, acting (see *Mayans M.C.*) and – perhaps most pertinently – meditation, a practise embodied here in celestial synth-pop songs of release and wonder. Even if the "feel your bliss" mantras take some swallowing, the hymnal More You and vocoder dancefloor call of Communication showcase the new direction beautifully, with Showalter's Tim Buckley-ish vocals particularly exultant. Elsewhere, the synth glint of Ananda – shades of Tangerine Dream – and house piano vamps of Ascend You add disarmingly blissful declarations of a newly opened mind. Between misfits anthem Party At Monster Lake and the titular closer's ride to the sunset, *Miracle Focus* testifies to the revivifying powers of curiosity and communion with invitingly expansive, epiphanic fervour. *Kevin Harley*

## Swim Deep
There's A Big Star Outside
★★★
*Submarine Cat SUBC 140 Y (CD, LP)*
**Capitalising on Harry Styles' patronage**

Briefly tipped when their knockabout 2013 debut *Where The Heaven Are We* went Top 20, Birmingham quintet Swim Deep could get fresh attention a decade on as Harry Styles has declared himself a fan. More importantly, their sound has dramatically changed in the five years since album three. Turning 30, marriage and fatherhood have led singer Ozzy Williams to turn to a harmony-led mood indebted to Teenage Fanclub, Gorky's Zygotic Mynci and, as the title implies, Alex Chilton. A handful of songs directly addressing new fatherhood are as gauche as decades of Hey Jude stereotypes have warned. Aided by Bill Ryder-Jones' lush production, Swim Deep instead excel when the lyrics and melodies are more opaque, such as the churning First Song. With reliable melodies, Swim Deep cope fine in the deep end. *John Earls*

## Alfie Templeman
Radiosoul
★★★★
*Chess Club CCLP 19 (CD, LP)*
**Bedfordshire gets the funk**

Hailing from rural Bedfordshire, Alfie Templeman established himself next to indie singer-songwriter peers like Declan McKenna and Jack Garratt via his cheery 2022 debut, *Mellow Moon*. Tuneful as it was, few will have predicted Templeman to make such a brilliant step up within two years. The guitar-laden Switch and psychedelic Submarine are familiarly winning alternative pop. Everywhere else, Templeman bounces over into muscular funk, propelled by his new startling falsetto and the kind of meaty basslines that have kept Phoenix in business for 25 years. Nile Rodgers pops by on Just A Dance, but even he doesn't outshine Templeman's colourful explosion of joy. Closer to a one-man Hot Chip than anything his solo contemporaries are producing, it's hard to think of anyone quite like the 2024 version of Templeman. *John Earls*

## Kamasi Washington
Fearless Movement
★★★★★
*Young YO 350 LP (2CD, 2LP)*
**Dazzling fifth from famed US sax player**

A decade ago Kamasi Washington was instrumental in precipitating the jazz revival, releasing *The Epic* in 2015, a triple album featuring almost three hours of music that tipped a chapeau to the leviathans of spiritual jazz. His latest might only contain half that amount of music, but it feels similarly weighty and epochal. Thundercat features while the legendary George Clinton represents allegiance to the forebears, bringing requisite funkiness to Get Lit. Moreover, there's even a pivot to flute – highly fashionable right now – with Andre 3000 guesting on Dream State. The inspiration for the record came from Washington's new role as a father, and while he says he struggled to get this one off the ground, he's ultimately birthed another milestone. *Jeremy Allen*

## Jim White
All Hits: Memories
★★★★
*Drag City DC 895 (CD, LP, Cassette)*
**Eminent tub-thumper's impressionistic solo debut**

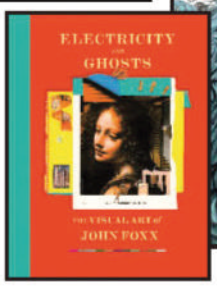
Whether playing with Aussie instrumentalists Dirty Three, or accompanying indie luminaries such as Nick Cave, PJ Harvey, Will Oldham and Cat Power, Jim White's drumming is instantly recognisable. His fluttering, scurrying style strikes an absorbing balance between the percussionist's traditional roles of time-keeping and textural amelioration. On *All Hits: Memories*, White showcases this singular technique across an intimate series of skittering sketches, charged with bristling rimshots, sizzling hi-hats and feathered brushes fidgeting on snare. With only an occasional woozy synth for garnish, this album digs beneath the taut skins of White's kit, charting a mutually invigorating relationship between player and instrument, alternating from visceral frolics to pointillist sensitivity at the drop of a beat. *Spencer Grady*

**NEXT MONTH**
**John Lennon Graham Gouldman**
**Louis Armstrong Humanist**
**Joni Mitchell Billy Childish**

# Books

## State Of The Art

**Synth-pop pioneer's collected artworks.**
***By Nick Dalton***



**John Foxx: head music**

### John Foxx
Electricity And Ghosts
★★★★
*Rocket 88, £44*
*ISBN: 9781915156143, 224 pages*

Unbeknown to many, John Foxx created post-punk combo Ultravox! as a project at the Royal College of Art and this elegant tome takes us from the spiky collages that echoed the band in the late 70s right through to the eerily beautiful images that accompany today's ambient persona.

Foxx's works, graphic design colliding with classicism, dominate this fine quality art book, yet there's also a history of the artist who is happy to slip behind the name of one of his projects, The Quiet Man. In minimalist interludes he recounts his decision to abandon Ultravox! and heavy touring for studio time, both art and music.

There are moody, mono, photographic cityscapes, often with a quiet man somewhere in shot, and there are colourful looks at the art that adorned 80s solo albums such as *In Mysterious Ways*. But perhaps Foxx is at his best on the majestic art inspired by his *Cathedral Oceans* trilogy of mood-meets-mystic-choral albums – medieval portraits hiding behind rock, nature and shrouds – and *London Overgrown*… think St Paul's and tower blocks swathed in ivy.

There are other album projects, commissions – book covers from Salman Rushdie to Shakespeare – and sculpture. Monumentally beautiful, literally – and the £120 signature edition comes with a signed print.

### Q&A

**Musician and artist, or artist and musician? John Foxx talks about his double life…**

**Given all your music and the art that accompanies it, which comes first?**
It's about the same – but it varies! I started in art school, art was the main thing and I always wanted to continue that. I always had a strong idea of what the visuals should be like with Ultravox! but I always enjoyed going against trends. There was punk, all ripped and torn, and I suddenly thought in 1978 that it would be good to go against all that and do something classical and restrained… our *Systems Of Romance* album cover created a trend with bands like New Order.

**Much of your art is linked to your music but the Quiet Man photographs seem a work apart…**
That was meant to be my exit from rock'n'roll. I wanted to get away from the conventions of a band, being the centre of attention. I found a grey suit in Oxfam and if you wore a grey suit it was a mode of invisibility.

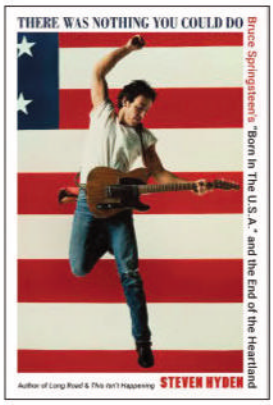
**And that was a new way of life?**
Repeating yourself is pretty boring. If you can start something off and if the concept and the people are right, it develops a life of its own. That's the exciting thing. It suddenly became possible for one man and a synth to make an album. It was irresistible.

> "I always enjoyed going against trends"

**There were solo hits and then a gap before *Cathedral Oceans* that, in 1997, was otherworldly, the artwork even more so…**
It was accidental. I always took photos on tour with Ultravox!: statues, overgrown buildings and walls, and I didn't know what to do with them. I'd put them on a lightbox but picked up two together and suddenly got a new look. I'd just begun *Cathedral Oceans* and I realised I had the visual equivalent, hallucinogenic with colours as intense as a stained-glass window.

**Sounds like the book could prompt an exhibition…**
It's being discussed, and there's talk of something digital at the National Film Theatre…

**What's next?**
There's a new album by The Maths, and a solo piano album. And I have lots of pieces that Harold Budd sent me that we were working on before he died – I left them alone for a while but there's enough for a couple of albums. There's talk of solo piano concerts but with The Maths, everyone there has their own career. It's like trying to knit fog…
*As told to Nick Dalton*




### There Was Nothing You Could Do: Bruce Springsteen's Born In The USA And The End Of The Heartland
Steven Hyden
★★★★★
*Hachette, £28*
*ISBN 9780306832062, 272 pages*
**Glory Days in focus**
First up, this is not the book for you if you want a blow-by-blow account of the making of *Born In The USA*. Instead, Hyden (*Your Favorite Band Is Killing Me*, *Twilight Of The Gods*) uses Springsteen's commercial peak as a jumping-off point to explore big ideas about America in the early 80s; parallels between Bruce, Elvis and Dylan; the impact of MTV on the music of the time; the album's ubiquity; its subject's politics; Springsteen as the last centrist rock star; the album's tracklisting, and so much more.

Hyden puts it all across with a lightness of touch, a deep knowledge and love of Springsteen's music, and a healthy dose of irreverence. He understands criticism of his hero and is able to find fun in it, giving the book a balance so many of its type lacks. He's especially effective when articulating the emotional core of Springsteen's music, from his spellbinding analysis of the intro rap from the *Live/1975-85* version of The River to his convincing theory that Bobby Jean is about Little Steven leaving the E Street Band. This is essential reading for anyone interested in rock'n'roll, let alone Springsteen. *Jamie Atkins*

### To Ease My Troubled Mind: The Unauthorised History Of Billy Childish
Ted Kessler
★★★★
*White Rabbit, £30*
*ISBN: 9781399615532, 312 pages*
**Brilliant trip into the life of the Kent maverick**
This is a wild, frank and yet friendly biography of the musician, artist, poet and writer. From tortured childhood, dyslexic and abused by a family friend, to acclaimed painter and godfather of Kent's Medway music scene, creator of 150-plus albums, punk to sea shanties, it's a story of a manically moustachioed renaissance man. That man may be irascible and self-obsessed but the results speak for themselves.

Kessler says Childish suggested the book despite his own autobiographical writing because "we might enjoy ourselves", suggesting that it's actually a delightfully twisted art installation of his own devising. Kessler's mosaic approach combines social awareness, Childish's anarchic yet moving musings, thoughts of school and band chums and a wise, witty look at his life. While it's about Childish's pain and confusion, it's also a gung-ho adventure, every tale about drink, women and rock'n'roll seemingly a badge of honour.

No holds barred was Childish's instruction, friends and foes uncensored. Like Tracey Emin (he married someone else while they were a couple and left her with an unpleasant condition)… and she is a friend. Funny, sad and uplifting in equal proportions – you can't read it without seeking out an album or 20. *Nick Dalton*

### The Piano Player Of Budapest
Roxanne de Bastion
★★★★
*Robinson, £22*
*ISBN: 9781472147844, 266 pages*
**The sounds and salvation of war**
This is the true tale of Stephen de Bastion, an untutored lad from Budapest who, after a Second World War hell of work camps, a 1,500-mile danger trek through the Russian winter and two concentration camps, wound up living in Stratford-upon-Avon and starting anew with concerts and BBC recordings.

His baby grand piano was there from start to finish, and his story only emerged when grand-daughter Roxanne inherited the scuffed instrument. The story pours out of her father's home, where she found cassettes of classical-tinged cabaret recordings along with notes and autobiographical tapes.

De Bastion was playing to the cultured party generation at home and across Switzerland in 1937 before Hitler changed everything and, along with thousands more Hungarian Jews, was led away.

He survived and, in 1946 his song Remember Me was a European jazz hit. Roxanne tells of the good fortune beside the horror that has many a reflection on today's world (Stephen also escaped from the Russian invasion of Kyiv) with gentle sorrow and sad humour. A singer-songwriter living in London, she's also used the tapes to create a mesmerising album (produced by The Verve's Simon Tong and featuring her own duet with Ed Harcourt). Tragic and yet magical. *Nick Dalton*

## Brian Jones: Astrology, Beliefs, Health, Psychic Sensitivity

Andrea J Miles

★★

*Green Magic, £12.99*

*ISBN 9781915580191, 156 pages*

**The story of a Stone, written in the stars**

The back cover of this slim(ish) tome stresses it's not a standard biography covering the late Rolling Stone's career in music nor his tumultuous private life, but rather an examination of "the essence of Jones's motivating force." Consequently, the book will be catnip for readers of an astrological bent, while those who think cynicism is a healthier way to go will detect a strong whiff of hokum.

The author analyses events in the musician's history noting, for instance, "the Moon in Leo energy adds warmth, dazzle and exuberance" – which, as we all know, is "echoed in the Sun square Jupiter aspect". To help flesh out the woolly astral plane portraiture, comparisons are provided by illustrations of the natal zodiac charts of lovers and friends, including Anita Pallenberg and Jimmy Page.

It's a fanciful way of telling us Jones was a complicated man beset by flaws and insecurities, whose early death was perhaps some kind of destiny (Miles even makes mention of the tiresome "27 Club"). There may well be fans out there who'll glean comfort from learning about the supposed building blocks of Jones' psyche, although those more substantively affected by a hero's passing are just as likely to find it offensive.

*Terry Staunton*

## When I Died For The First Time

Tim Booth

★★★

*Constable, £22*

*ISBN 9781643963457, 416 pages*

**James singer sits down and writes a rock fable**

The ages-old author's adage of "write what you know" can't help but spring to mind when an international rock star dips his toe in the prose fiction pool for the first time. That's not to suggest James frontman Booth's debut novel is necessarily autobiographical, but it's probably safe to assume it's at least partially inspired by the behaviour of others in his showbiz orbit.

Our (anti-)hero is Seth Brakes, erstwhile creative linchpin of notorious combo The Lucky Fuckers, with whom he reunites following a near-death experience, and is soon enjoying another slice of the pop stardom pie. However, events from his chequered past are looming in the shadows and threaten to derail his career all over again.

What follows is a knockabout yarn laced with the requisite sex, drugs and rock'n'roll but making a few serious points along the way, vividly recounted with a keen ear for believable dialogue that froths and fizzes throughout. Booth's writing style has much in common with the short, stabbing sentences of the pulp fiction of, say, US crime novelist James Ellroy, although the knock-on effect of that is several characters don't have a huge amount of flesh on their bones. *Terry Staunton*

## Hendrix: 1967 Day By Day

Ben Valkhoff & Luigi Garuti

★★★★★

*Vormgeving:Ben Valkhoff €27.95*

*392 pages*

**Fifth and final part of definitive series**

Initially motivated by glaring howlers being recycled by lazy writers in Hendrix books and press coverage, Dutch Jimi archivist Valkhoff and Italian collector Garuti set about putting the record straight with 2019's diary style *Hendrix 1968: Day By Day*. Exhaustively checking facts through eyewitnesses, friends, associates and reliable sources, the pair were able to cover recording dates, live appearances, jam sessions, press interviews and incidents in extraordinarily forensic detail, further volumes covering 1969, 1970 and, earlier this year, 1966/67.

This final volume covers Hendrix's rise to global fame between May and December 1967, starting with The Wind Cries Mary (Experience receive £78.75 fee for their *Top Of The Pops* appearance), ending with huge Christmas On Earth event at Olympia (and Chris Welch remembering Jimi's half-hour Auld Lang Syne at favourite jamming haunt the Speakeasy). In between, the Experience release *Are You Experienced* and *Axis: Bold As Love* and tour the UK, Europe and US. The latter includes the doomed Monkees tour and blowing off The Who at his Monterey breakthrough (on two tabs of "Monterey Purple"!).

Now this series is complete, it can only remain the last word on the greatest rock star of all time. Or as this lifelong Jimi nut since 1966 is quoted on the cover, "the new gold standard for Hendrix books". *Kris Needs*

## Searching For Dexys Midnight Runners

Nige Tassell

★★★★

*Nine Eight Books, £22*

*ISBN 9781785120596, 330 pages*

**Warm-hearted insider tale of the team that met in caffs**

Dexys Midnight Runners inspired a devotion that few other outfits equalled. In Kevin Rowland, Dexys had a leader with one of the fiercest, most singular visions in 20th-century pop music and, in return, expected strong commitment from the group's followers. Nige Tassell, fresh from his forensic research in his *Whatever Happened To The C86 Kids,* was one of these devotees. Here, he tracks down nearly all of those who were in the group (*not* a band: remember Intense Emotions Circler?) between 1978-1985. In hearing their stories, he captures a tale that is as much about Dexys as it is a vital social history of musicians in this period. Rowland was a gangleader from the off: the romanticised story of how Mk. 1 Dexys came together in their debut album's sleevenotes was not *that* wide of the mark. The monastic approach of the second embodiment is explored, and the turbulence among the ranks is covered as Dexys mutated into dungaree-sporting, chart-cavorting pop stars. And all this is before *Don't Stand Me Down*, Rowland's troubled masterpiece. Few punches are pulled, and any who pondered why Rowland's allies and lieutenants vanished (and returned) will have questions answered. Tassell probes sympathetically their next steps, not letting his wide-eyed admiration for the 'wild hearted outsiders' derail his questioning. One thing is clear – for all involved, whether reminiscing fondly or otherwise – being in Dexys Midnight Runners will forever be embedded deeply in their psyche. *Daryl Easlea*

## Louder Than Words

Joe Matera

★★★

*Empire Publications, £12.95*

*ISBN 9781915616128, 234 pages*

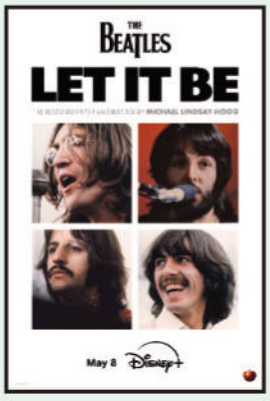
**From fan to front of stage**

Matera, an Australian rock guitarist who's played around the world, and a well-published rock writer, comes up with a frenetic read that's part-autobiography, part-history lesson. Whether it's the lengthy life story of Canadian rocker Bryan Adams told through the eyes of one of his greatest fans (Matera, of course), or the career retrospective of his much-loved Korgis, the Brit synth-poppers, there's a bright-eyed enthusiasm and depth of detail. As such Adams, who's become a chum, writes a foreword and James Warren, frontman of the Korgis, a band with whom Matera has recently recorded, an introduction.

For the book Matera's interviewed members of everyone from Uriah Heep to The Motels to Krokus, cheery recollections of the hard life of a rocker – and details at some length the traumas of one of his own solo European tours, as well as oddball meetings with latter versions of Canned Heat and The Animals. As someone who grew up Down Under, his view of the musical world could seem topsy-turvy to many of us, with Gerry Rafferty and Brit one-hit wonders Voyager getting more attention than one might expect. But it's an unstoppable tome full of laughs and behind-the-scenes stories.

*Nick Dalton*

# Films




## Let It Be

★★★★

*(Streaming on Disney+)*

**Infamous fly-on-the-wall "obit" remastered**

Hidden from view for decades by the official gatekeepers of The Beatles' ongoing legacy, director Michael Lindsay-Hogg's film of the Fab Four supposedly falling out at the tail-end of their career has become a kind of twisted myth. Its continued absence from TV screens, VHS/DVD or the art house circuit gives the impression it was deemed a misfire, but watching afresh 55 years after the events it depicts suggests the initial reception was a huge overreaction.

Part of its sombre reputation is undoubtedly due to the context of the times in which the movie first appeared. Although it was filmed in January 1969, *Let It Be* didn't open in cinemas until May the following year, fewer than five weeks after news broke of the group splitting up. Consequently, critics and bereft fans went looking for answers, and scenes of various members niggling each other on a Twickenham sound stage or in the studio at Apple's Savile Row HQ became, to all intents and purposes, components of an obituary.

But this is rock'n'roll, man, and friction has always been part of the creative process. Yes, we see Harrison get the hump when McCartney oversteps and tries to tell him how to play a particular guitar part – so what? There are bigger bust-ups on tour buses every day of the year.

It's useful to remind ourselves of the timeline here, as what the cameras captured was *not* the death knell of the world's biggest band (the semi-impromptu gig on the Apple rooftop is endlessly joyous, for a start). Lest we forget, they reconvened later the same year and recorded the masterful *Abbey Road* album.

Of course, the film has pretty much been usurped by director Peter Jackson's (mostly) cheerier nine-hour Fab-athon *Get Back*, assembled from the 100-plus hours of footage Lindsay-Hogg shot but whittled down to 80 minutes for cinema consumption. Taking that into consideration, *Let It Be* should be regarded as less a portentous sign of a band on the run, and more of a historical curio.

*Terry Staunton*

## Not On The Heep: The Heavy Metal Saga of Lee Kerslake

★★★

*MVD Visual MVD 10643D (DVD)*

**Remembering a prolific percussionist**

It's an irony that Lee Kerslake formed the backbone of the so-unloved Uriah Heep for so many years, only to hit the global headlines when he spent a relatively brief sabbatical (sic) with the newly solo Ozzy Osbourne. The Sabbath singer doesn't appear on this visual memoir, filmed after the late drummer (who died in 2020) was informed of his incurable cancer, but his shadow certainly falls over it. And in a scene which may or may not have been staged, Kerslake takes delivery of platinum discs for his early-80s work with Osbourne on *Blizzard Of Oz* and *Diary Of A Madman* that he had been denied for decades: a real tearjerking moment.

Yet, as with the appearance of KISS for a bout of mutual backslapping, such artifice is unnecessary. Kerslake is certainly known and revered in his field, as Deep Purple's Ian Paice makes clear. The scene of the two drumming together and discussing techniques is fascinating, even for non-percussionists. Coverage of recording his one and only solo album, released three years ago, is less essential. And while archive footage of Kerslake in his prime would have been a welcome addition, this affectionate farewell will be welcomed by fans. *Michael Heatley*

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**Vinyl Tap** – 'New & Used, Vinyl & Cds. New Releases, Indies Exclusives, Dinked Editions. Over 150,000 items in stock online and available in store. Can't find in the shop, please ask' **42 John William Street, Huddersfield, HD1 1ER.** 01484 845999 www.vinyltap.co.uk

## NORTHERN IRELAND

**Boneyard Records** – Stockists of new and used vinyl. Blues, soul, jazz, country, folk, reggae and indie. Also a selection of guitars, strings and record players. **27-29 Market Street Arcade, Omagh, County Tyrone BT78 1EE** Tel: 07765 788591 Email: johnniemullin@hotmail.co.uk

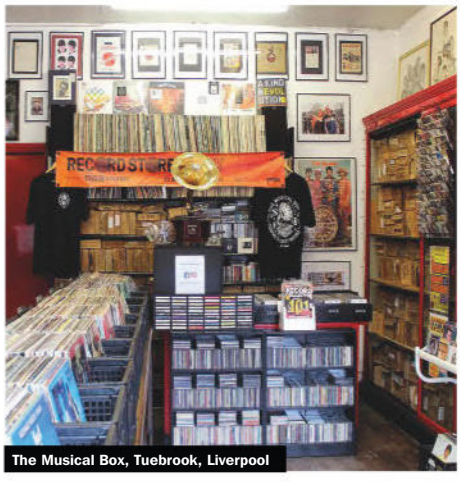
**Vanilla Records** – 1000'S of quality pre-owned and new records and CDs nestled upstairs in an ice cream parlour. Rock, roots, indie, punk, psych, wave, blues, jazz. On Facebook + Instagram. Collections bought. **4 William Street, Cookstown, Co.Tyrone, BT80 8ND** Tel: 07903249850 www.vanillarecords.co.uk / vanillarecordsireland@gmail.com

## OVERSEAS

**Nostalgipalatset / Trash Palace** – 'Sweden's BIGGEST store for VINYL! We specialise in collectable rock, progressive, indie, jazz, blues, soul, reggae etc. Also Scandinavia´s No 1 stockist of RARE metal & punk. Even a wide range of pop memorabilia like posters, magazines etc." Open Mo-Fri 11am-7pm, Sat-Sun 11am-3pm.' **Sankt Eriksgatan 101, 11331 Stockholm, Sweden.** Tel: (+46)8340061 / info@nostalgipalatset.com, www.nostalgipalatset.com

**Gibert Joseph Musique** – 'Biggest independent records shop from France for more than 35 years.' **34 Boulevard Saint Michel, 75006 Paris, France.** Gibertjoseph.com Tel: +33 44 41 88 53. Email: philippe.marie@gibertjoseph.com

**Hot Stuff AB** – 'Southern Sweden´s leading shop for collectable records & ephemera. 50.000+ items of second hand, "new" limited editions and inhouse labels. Bank vault with high end collectables and wide range of vinyls in almost any genre. If you travel a long way, we even got special deals for hotels.' **Norra Esplanaden 5, Almhult, Sweden 34330.** Tel: +46 476 10449 / www.hotstuff.se



The Musical Box, Tuebrook, Liverpool

# Shop Of The Month: Drift Records – Totnes

With its commitment to spreading the word about great music, **Drift Records** has flourished over the years. Drift's Rupert Morrison tells **Steve Burniston** the story behind this remarkable shop.

**Tell us about your shop, including its history and the range of music you sell.**
Drift started as World Video & Music in the early 90s, with an erratic collection of soundtrack, jazz and exotica across CD and vinyl, with a pretty big rental library of VHS tapes. The film side was much-loved, but whereas the physical side of music has seen a small renaissance, mail order DVD rental and on-demand video streaming put an end to those days. We became Drift around 2005/6. We totally follow our ears: anything new/newly reissued from jazz and ambient, through beat-based music, garage, folk, Americana and all sorts of experimental tones in between. We've been phenomenally lucky to carve out a space where we can stock music we like and try and evangelise about it as best we can. Alongside a lot of hard work and terrible margins, it's a pretty dreamy job for the best part.

**How has record retailing developed in the last few years?**
We were early internet adopters and took Drift from a small country town record shop to an internationally recognised outlet in a decade or so. The number of people who use our website and connect with us that way has grown and grown and means that we have regulars all over the globe, as well as the ones who pop in regularly. The speed at which we have to work, and the sheer amount of competition, is pretty daunting, but we try and focus on honest conjecture.

**Who are your biggest selling artists?**
We have plenty of house favourites that we try and keep in stock. I'd guess that we've sold more copies of Vince Guaraldi's A *Charlie Brown Christmas* over the years than pretty much everything else combined.

**How has *Record Store Day* been for you?**
It was a remarkable, industry-changing thing, but the event has become pretty stale… It remains well-meaning, but the danger is that it'll progressively lose the shop-led charm that made it such a revolutionary enterprise in the first place.

**Tell us about how your Record Of The Month club works.**
We always ran it in a ramshackle way. A couple of years back we noticed what a great exploratory service it is, and it has grown and grown. It's been really touching to make some excellent friends with people who have either joined up or have received Record Club as a gift. The staff get together, we listen to a bunch of prospective titles, and we all agree on one. We then send out either CD or LP copies to people. We have very few grumbles!

**Name some albums you would like to see reissued.**
The self-titled The Merry-Go-Round album is really hard to find; we'd also love to be able to introduce our audience to Emitt Rhodes and his first two solo albums. Spiritualized's *Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space* is currently not around… I love Clinic… The first Sparklehorse albums… Mark Hollis' post-Talk Talk solo LP… The KLF would be fun… Aphex Twin's *Drukqs*...

***Drift Records, 103 High Street, Totnes,***

# RECORD LISTINGS

Sell Vinyl/CDs direct to RC readers, call us on **0208 752 8172**
or Email **listings@recordcollectormag.com**

**NEXT ISSUE: AUGUST 2024 (on sale 11 JULY)**
**Deadline for submitting adverts (Listings & Classified): Monday 17 JUNE**
**Please email your advert (word doc/excel file/plain text) to: listings@recordcollectormag.com**
**Postal address: Record Collector Listings, Diamond Publishing Ltd, 2nd Floor, Saunders House, 52-53 The Mall, Ealing, London W5 3TA**
Following issue: SEPTEMBER 2024 (on sale 8 AUGUST) Deadline: Monday 15 JULY

## GOLDEN OLDIES

**Write to: DAVE SANDERS, 30 NEW ROAD, WHITEHILL, GU35 9AX.**
**Tel: 01420 472432. Email: davesanders2003@hotmail.com**
**Postage: Singles / EPs £2.25 for first, then £25p each additional. LPs £4.50 for first then £1.50 each additional.**
**All records have money back guarantee.**

**SINGLES**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ANTON, Shot Down In Action (Spark SRL1120, Demo) | M | 4.50 |
| AT LAST 1958 ROCK & ROLL SHOW, I Can't Drive (CBS 3349, sol) | EX | 7.50 |
| BURR BAILEY & SIX SHOOTERS, San Francisco Bay (Decca F11686) | M | 12.50 |
| LONG JOHN BALDRY, How Long Will It Last (U. Artists UP1107) | EX | 12.50 |
| FONTELLA BASS, Rescue Me (Chess CRS8023) | EX | 7.50 |
| BEATLES, She Loves You (Parl. R5055) | EX | 6.50 |
| BEATLES, Can't Buy Me Love (Parl. R5114) | EX | 6.50 |
| BEATLES, A Hard Day's Night (Parl. R5160) | EX | 6.50 |
| BEATLES, We Can Work It Out (Parl. R5389) | EX | 6.50 |
| BEATLES, Strawberry Fields Forever (Parl. R5570, PC) | EX/M | 45.00 |
| JEFF BECK, Hi Ho Silver Lining (Col. DB8151) | M | 7.50 |
| BERNADETTE, Come Kiss Me Love (Rim 2) | M | 9.50 |
| JOHNNY BOND, Hot Rod Jalopy (London HLU9189) | M | 7.50 |
| GRAHAM BONNEY, When Evelyn Was Mine (Col. DB88682, Demo) | M | 15.00 |
| BOSTON CRABS, Down In Mexico (Col. DB7586) | EX | 9.50 |
| BOSTON CRABS, Gin House (Col. DB7830) | EX | 9.50 |
| BRASS TACKS, I'll Keep Holding On (Big T BIG110) | M | 25.00 |
| JOE BROWN & BRUVVERS, That's What Love Will Do (Picc 7N35106) | M | 3.50 |
| RUTH BROWN, This Little Girl's Gone Rockin' (Tri-London HLE8757) | EX | 45.00 |
| JOHNNY BURNETTE, God, Country And My Baby (London HLG9453) | EX | 15.00 |
| CALLAN & JOHN, House Of Delight (CBS 4447, Demo) | M | 30.00 |
| JO ANN CAMPBELL, Motorcycle Michael (HMV POP873) | EX | 12.50 |
| FREDDIE CANNON, Tallahassie Lassie (Top Rank JAR135) | EX | 7.50 |
| FREDDIE CANNON, What's Gonna Happen etc. (Stateside SS118) | M | 3.50 |
| CAREFREES, We Love You Beatles (Oriole CB1916) | EX | 9.50 |
| NELL CARTER, Dreams (RCA 2503) | M | 7.50 |
| CASTELLS, Sacred (London HLN9392 | EX | 7.50 |
| MEL CARTER, When A Boy Falls In Love (Pye Int. 7N25312) | EX | 27.50 |
| RAY CATHODE, Time Beat (Parl. R4901) | EX | 9.50 |
| CHEETAHS, Mecca (Philips BF1362) | M | 15.00 |
| CHEETAHS, Soldier Boy (Philips BF1383) | M | 15.00 |
| CHIMES, Once In A While (London HLU9263) | M | 15.00 |
| NEIL CHRISTIAN, That's Nice (Strike JH301) | EX | 7.50 |
| CHUCK AND GARY, Teenie Weenie Jeanie (HMV POP466) | M | 25.00 |
| CLIQUE, Sugar On Sunday (London HLU10286, Demo) | M | 15.00 |
| EDDIE COCHRAN, Three Steps To Heaven (London HLG9115) | EX | 4.50 |
| EDDIE COCHRAN, Weekend (London HLG9362) | EX | 9.50 |
| SONNY COLE, I Dreamed I Was Elvis (US Rollin' Rock 45-001) | M | 7.50 |
| COLLEGE BOYS, Good Times (Pye 7N17294, Demo) | M | 7.50 |
| COUNT DOWNE & THE ZEROS, Hello My Angel (Ember EMBS189) | EX | 20.00 |
| MICHAEL COX, Sweet Little Sixteen (HMV POP905, small wol) | EX | 7.50 |
| CRESCENDOS, Oh Julie (Tri-London HLU8563) | EX | 35.00 |
| CRESTERS, I Just Don't Understand (HMV POP1249) | M | 7.50 |
| CRESTS, A Year Ago Tonight (Top Rank JAR302) | EX | 15.00 |
| CRICKETS, Peggy Sue Got Married (Coral Q72317) | EX | 6.50 |
| CRICKETS, It's So Easy (Tri-Coral Q72343) | M | 12.50 |
| JIMMY CROSS, Super Duper Man (Red Bird RB10042, Demo) | M | 20.00 |
| CRYSTALS, I Wonder (London HLU9852) | M | 30.00 |
| MIKE DALLON, I Care About You (RCA 1478, Demo) | M | 22.50 |
| DANNY DAVIS, Love Me (Parl. R4657) | EX | 9.50 |
| DAVE DEE, DOZY etc., You Make It Move (Fontana TF630) | EX | 3.50 |
| FATS DOMINO, Young School Girl (Tri-London HLP8727) | M | 20.00 |
| FATS DOMINO, Whole Lotta Loving (Tri-London HLP8759) | EX | 9.50 |
| FATS DOMINO, Country Boy (London HLP9073) | M | 6.50 |
| DREAM WEAVERS, It's Almost Tomorrow (Gold Bruns. 05515) | EX | 15.00 |
| DRIFTERS, I Count The Tears (London HLK9287) | EX | 15.00 |
| DRIFTERS, When My Little Girl Is Smiling (London HLK9522) | M | 6.50 |
| DRIFTERS, Memories Are Made Of This (Atlantic 4084) | EX | 7.50 |
| EARL-JEAN, Randy (Colpix PX748) | VG | 5.50 |
| J. VINCENT EDWARD, Run To The Sun (CBS 4388) | M | 9.50 |
| BERN ELLIOTT & FENMEN, Money (Decca F11770) | M | 6.50 |
| ESSEX, Easier Said Than Done (Col. DB7077) | M | 9.50 |
| ESSEX, She's Got Everything (Col. DB7178, Demo) | EX | 15.00 |
| PAUL EVANS, Midnite Special (London HLL9045) | EX | 15.00 |
| PAUL EVANS, Hushabye Little Guitar (London HLL9239) | M | 9.50 |
| GEORGIE FAME, Get Away (Col. DB7946) | EX | 3.50 |
| GEORGIE FAME, Sunny (Col. DB8015) | EX | 3.50 |
| CHRIS FARLOWE, Think (Immediate IM023) | EX | 15.00 |
| FEDERALS, Twilight Time (Parl. R5193) | EX | 7.50 |
| FENDERS Orioles, Down Home Girl (Piccadilly 7N35247, sol) | EX | 12.50 |
| FIREBALLS, Bulldog (Top Rank JAR276) | EX | 4.50 |
| FIREFLIES, I Can't Say Goodbye (London HLU9057) | EX | 35.00 |
| FLAMINGOS, Love Walked In (Top Rank JAR213) | EX | 22.50 |
| FLEE-REKKERS, Sunday Date (Pye 7N15288) | M | 9.50 |
| WADE FLEMONS, What's Happening (Top Rank JAR327) | EX | 5.50 |
| FLOWER POT MEN, Lets Go To San Francisco (Deram DM142) | M | 3.50 |
| FOURMOST, Everything In The Garden (Parl. R5304) | EX | 5.50 |
| INEZ & CHARLIE FOXX, Come By Here (Stateside SS556, F/S Label) | M | 25.00 |
| ARETHA FRANKLIN, Love Is The Only Thing (Fontana H271) | EX | 7.50 |
| FREDDIE & DREAMERS, If You've Got A Minute Baby (Col. DB7857, Demo) | M | 7.50 |
| DOTTY FREDERICK, Ricky (Top Rank JAR106) | M | 20.00 |
| GENE & EUNICE, The Vow (Vogue POP 45-V9126) | EX | 15.00 |
| GIORGIO, Moody Trudy (MCA MK5023, Demo) | M | 15.00 |
| BOBBY GOLDSBORO, Broomstick Cowboy (U. Artists UP1120) | EX | 4.50 |
| BOBBY GOLDSBORO, No Fun At The Fair (U. Artists UP1166) | EX | 12.50 |
| BOBBY GRAHAM, Skin Deep (Fontana TF521) | M | 15.00 |
| BILL HALEY & HIS COMETS, Skinny Minnie (Tri-Bruns. 05742) | EX | 9.50 |
| WILBERT HARRISON, Kansas City (Top Rank JAR132) | EX | 9.50 |
| TUBBY HAYES, Sally (Fontana TF397) | M | 9.50 |
| HIGH KEYS, Que Sera Sera (London HLK9768) | EX | 15.00 |
| HILLTOPPERS, The Joker (Tri-London HLD8528) | M | 27.50 |
| RON HOLDEN, My Babe (London HLU9116) | M | 35.00 |
| BUDDY HOLLY, Early In The Morning (Tri-Coral Q72333) | EX | 12.50 |
| BUDDY HOLLY, Peggy Sue Got Married (Coral Q72376) | EX | 7.50 |
| BUDDY HOLLY, Baby I Don't Care (Coral Q72432) | EX | 5.50 |
| BUDDY HOLLY & CRICKETS, You've Got Love (Coral Q72472) | EX | 15.00 |
| BUDDY HOLLY, Love's Made A Fool Of You (Coral Q72475) | M | 12.50 |
| BUDDY HOLLY, Look At Me (Coral Q72445) | EX | 7.50 |
| DANNY HUNTER, Who's Gonna Walk Ya Home (HMV POP775) | EX | 12.50 |
| IVORY JOE HUNTER, I'm Hooked (Capitol CL15220) | M | 15.00 |
| KRIS IFE, Give And Take (Music Factory CUB3, Demo) | EX | 12.50 |
| INCREDIBLE STRING BAND, Black Jack David (Island WIP6145, wol) | M | 3.50 |
| ISLEY BROTHERS, The Last Girl (Atlantic AT4010) | EX | 27.50 |
| JAN & DEAN, Heart And Soul (London HLU9395) | EX | 7.50 |
| JAN & DEAN, Norwegian Wood (Liberty LIB10225) | EX | 9.50 |
| JAN & DEAN, Yellow Balloon (CBS 202630) | M | 15.00 |
| KRIS JENSEN, Torture (Fontana 267241TF) | EX | 9.50 |
| JESTERS, Little Girl (RI 15) | EX | 17.50 |
| JETHRO TULL, Living In The Past (Island WIP6056) | EX | 7.50 |
| JETHRO TULL, Witch's Promise (Chrysalis WIP6077, PC) | EX/EX | 9.50 |
| BILLY JOE & CHECKMATES, Percolator (London HLU9502) | EX | 4.50 |
| BOBBY KALPHAT, Zion Hill (Faith FA008) | M | 12.50 |
| ERNIE K-DOE, Mother-In-Law (London HLU9330) | EX | 7.50 |
| FRANK KELLY, What Do You Wanna Do (Fontana 267277TF) | M | 7.50 |
| KEITH KELLY, Tease Me (Parl. R4640) | EX | 15.00 |
| NELSON KEENE, Keep Loving Me (HMV POP814) | EX | 6.50 |
| JOHNNY KIDD & PIRATES, You Got What It Takes (HMV POP698, sol) | EX | 4.50 |
| JOHNNY KIDD & PIRATES, Shakin' All Over (HMV POP753) | EX | 7.50 |
| JOHNNY KIDD & PIRATES, Shot Of Rhythm & Blues (HMV POP1088) | EX | 7.50 |
| RAMONA KING, It's In His Kiss (W. Bros WB125) | EX | 12.50 |
| GLADYS KNIGHT & PIPS, Lovers Always Forgive (Stateside SS352) | EX | 20.00 |
| JIMMY LENNON & ATLANTICS, Louisiana Mama (Decca F11825) | EX | 20.00 |
| GARY LEWIS & PLAYBOYS, She's Just My Style (Lib. LIB55846, Demo) | EX | 12.50 |
| GARY LEWIS & PLAYBOYS, Count On Me (Liberty LIB55778) | EX | 15.00 |
| JERRY LEE LEWIS, High School Confidential (Tri-Lon. HLS8780) | EX | 9.50 |
| JERRY LEE LEWIS, Breathless (Round London HLS8592) | M | 6.50 |
| JOHN LEYTON, On Lovers Hill (HMV POP1204) | EX | 4.50 |
| LITTLE EVA, Loco-Motion (London HL9581) | M | 3.50 |
| LOCOMOTIVE, Rudy's In Love (Parl. R5718) | EX | 9.50 |
| JIM LOWE, Four Walls (Tri-London HLD8431) | EX | 9.50 |
| LULU, Love Loves To Love, Love (Col. DB8295) | EX | 5.50 |
| KENNY LYNCH, Puff (HMV POP1057) | EX | 7.50 |
| NEIL MACARTHUR She's Not There (Deram DM225, Demo) | EX | 12.50 |
| NEIL MACARTHUR She's Not There (Deram DM225) | EX | 9.50 |
| LONNIE MACK, Wham (Stateside SS226) | EX | 12.50 |
| CARL MANN, Pretend (London HLS9006) | EX | 17.50 |
| MARCELS, Heartaches (Pye Int. 7N25114) | M | 9.50 |
| ERNIE MARESCA, Shout Shout (London HLU9531) | M | 12.50 |
| MARKETTS, Vanishing Point (W. Bros WB130, Demo) | M | 17.50 |
| JOY MARSHALL, When You Hold Me Tight (Decca F11863, Demo) | M | 7.50 |
| MARTHA & VANDELLAS, Dancing In The Street (State. SS345) | EX | 9.50 |
| HANK MARVIN, Sacha (Col. DB8601) | EX | 3.50 |
| MASQUERADERS, Love Peace & Understanding (Now 1001) | EX | 4.50 |
| MAYFIELD'S MULE, Double Dealing Woman (Parl. R5817) | EX | 7.50 |
| MARILYN MICHAELS, Tell Tommy I Miss Him (RCA 1208) | M | 6.50 |
| CHUCK MILLER, Auctioneer (Mercury AMT1026) | M | 9.50 |
| ZOOT MONEY'S BIG ROLL BAND, Star Of The Show (Col. DB8090) | EX | 20.00 |
| MICKIE MOST, The Feminine Look (Col. DB7117, Demo) | EX | 9.50 |
| DAVID McCALLUM, Communication (Capitol CL15439) | EX | 4.50 |
| CHRIS McCLURE, Hazy People (Polydor 56227) | M | 5.50 |
| CHAS McDEVITT SKIFFLE GROUP, Sing Sing Sing (Oriole CB1395) | M | 7.50 |
| NASHVILLE TEENS, Find My Way Back Home (Decca F12089, Demo) | EX | 12.50 |
| NERO & GLADIATORS, Czardas (Decca F11413) | EX | 9.50 |
| JIM NESBIT, Tiger In My Tank (Vocalion V9241, Demo) | EX | 12.50 |
| NEW HOPE, Won't Find Better Than Me (London HL10296, Demo) | EX | 7.50 |
| NEW FORESTERS, Travel On (Lyntone LYN932/933) | EX | 15.00 |
| NOCTURNES, Why (Col. DB8219) | EX | 4.50 |
| NORTHERN LIGHTS, Time To Move Along (U. Artists UP1123) | VG | 17.50 |
| ONE TWO AND THREE, Black Pearl (Decca F12093, Demo) | EX | 7.50 |
| OUTLAWS, Return Of The Outlaws (HMV POP1124) | EX | 9.50 |
| PAPA DOO RON RON, Be True To Your School (RCA 2620, Demo) | M | 6.50 |
| BOBBY PEDRICK, White Bucks & Saddle Shoes (Tri-London HLX8740) | EX | 12.50 |
| PEEPS, What Can I Say (Philips BF1443) | EX | 8.50 |
| RAY PETERSON, I Could Have Loved You So Well (Lon. HLX9874, Demo) | M | 9.50 |
| PETS, Cha-Hua-Hua (Tri-London HL8652) | EX | 12.50 |
| PHIL PHILLIPS & TWILIGHTS, Sea Of Love (Mercury AMT1059) | EX | 20.00 |
| WILSON PICKETT, In The Midnight Hour (Atlantic AT4036) | EX | 9.50 |
| WILSON PICKETT, Don't Fight It (Atlantic AT4052) | M | 6.50 |
| PICKWICKS, Apple Blossom Time (Decca F11901, Demo) | M | 9.50 |
| PILTDOWN MEN, Apretty Girl Is Like A Melody (Capitol CL15245) | EX | 9.50 |
| PINK FLOYD, See Emily Play (Solid Centre, Col. DB8214) | VG | 20.00 |
| PONY-TAILS, Born Too Late (HMV POP516) | EX | 4.50 |
| GROOVE JOE POOVEY, Ten Long Fingers (Injun 100) | M | 9.50 |
| ELVIS PRESLEY, Hound Dog (Gold HMV POP249) | EX | 75.00 |
| ELVIS PRESLEY, Too Much (Gold HMV POP330) | EX | 65.00 |
| ELVIS PRESLEY, All Shook Up (Gold HMV POP359) | EX | 75.00 |
| ELVIS PRESLEY, All Shook Up (Silver HMV POP359) | EX | 20.00 |
| ELVIS PRESLEY, King Creole (Tri RCA1081) | EX | 7.50 |
| ELVIS PRESLEY, Indescribably Blue (RCA 1565) | M | 12.50 |
| ELVIS PRESLEY, Your Time Hasn't Come Yet Baby (RCA 1714) | EX | 7.50 |
| ELVIS PRESLEY, U.S. Male (RCA 1688) | EX | 7.50 |
| PRETTY THINGS, Midnight To Six Man (Fontana TF647) | EX | 12.50 |
| ALAN PRICE SET, Shame (Decca F12691) | EX | 3.50 |
| ALAN PRICE, Sunshine & Rain (Decca F13017) | EX | 3.50 |
| PYRAMIDS, Penetration (London HLU9847) | M | 40.00 |
| QUIET FIVE, Homeward Bound (Parl. R5421) | EX | 8.50 |
| STEVE RACE GROUP, Crosstrap (Parl. R4808) | EX | 4.50 |
| RAINDROPS, What A Guy (London HL9718) | M | 15.00 |
| TEDDY RANDAZZO, Dance To The Locomotion (HMV POP1067) | EX | 6.50 |
| RAN-DELLS, Martian Hop (London HLU9760) | M | 9.50 |
| OTIS REDDING, My Girl (Atlantic AT4050) | EX | 7.50 |
| TONY REESE, Just About This Time Tomorrow (London HLJ8987) | M | 12.50 |
| REPARATA & DELRONS, Captain Of Your Ship (Bell BLL1002) | EX | 8.50 |
| CHARLIE RICH, Lonely Weekends (London HLU9107) | EX | 27.50 |
| CLIFF RICHARD, High Class Baby (Col. DB4203) | EX | 7.50 |
| RIP CHORDS, Here I Stand (CBS AAG143) | EX | 9.50 |
| RIP CHORDS, Gone (CBS AAG162) | EX | 9.50 |
| ROCKIN' REBELS, Wild Weekend (Stateside SS162) | EX | 9.50 |
| MARK ROGERS & MARKSMEN, Bubble Pop (Parl. R5045, Demo) | EX | 12.50 |
| ROLLING STONES, Last Time (Decca F12104) | EX | 7.50 |
| ROLLING STONES, Have You Seen Your Mother etc. (Decca F12497) | M | 9.50 |
| RONNY & DAYTONAS, California Bound (Stateside SS367, Demo) | EX | 15.00 |
| ROSIE & THEW ORIGINALS, Angel Baby (London HLU9266) | VG | 8.50 |
| ROUTERS, Let's Go (W. Bros WB77) | EX | 6.50 |
| STEVE ROWLAND, So Sad (Fontana TF844, sol) | EX | 9.50 |
| ROYAL TONES, Short Shorts (HMV POP454) | EX | 20.00 |
| SAMMY SALVO, Oh Julie (Tri-RCA 1032) | EX | 12.50 |
| DAVE SAMPSON, Sweet Dreams (Col. DB4449) | M | 9.50 |
| JACK SCOTT, My True Love (Tri-London HLU8626) | M | 7.50 |
| PEGGY SCOTT & JO JO BENSON, Soul Shake (Polydor 56761) | M | 6.50 |
| SEARCHERS, Sweet Nothin's (Philips BF1274) | M | 5.50 |
| NEIL SEDAKA, The Diary (Tri, RCA 1099) | EX | 9.50 |
| SHADOWS, Maroc 7 (Col. DB8170) | EX | 3.50 |
| DEE DEE SHARP, Ride (Cameo Parkway C230) | EX | 25.00 |
| SANDIE SHAW, Think It All Over (Pye 7N17726) | M | 6.50 |
| DOUG SHELDON, Lollipops And Roses (Decca F11514) | EX | 4.50 |
| SHERRYS, Pop Pop Pop-Eye (London HLW9625) | M | 12.50 |
| TROY SHONDELL, Island In The Sky (Liberty LIB55398, Demo) | EX | 9.50 |
| SIDEKICKS, Suspicions (RCA 1538, Demo) | EX | 12.50 |
| SNAPPERS, Big Bill (Top Rank JAR167) | M | 6.50 |
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LP BOB CORT, Eskimo Nell & Barrack Room Ballads (Decca LK 4301) EX/M 12.00
LP BOB CORT'S SKIFFLE, Yes! Suh! (Ace Of Clubs ACL 1197) EX/M 10.00
45 DAVE "BABY" CORTEZ, The Happy Organ (London Tri HLU 8852) EX 8.00
45 DAVE "BABY" CORTEZ, Belly Rub (US Roulette 4717, Promo) EX 6.00
LP DAVE "BABY" CORTEZ, The Happy Organ (US Design DLP-163) EX/EX 10.00
45 JOHN CORTEZ, If I Should Ever Lose Your Love (President PT 146, wol) EX 6.00
LP CORY BAND, National Champions 1974 (Decca SB 319) EX/EX 10.00
LP LARRY CORYELL, Introducing The Eleventh Hour (Vanguard VSD 79342) EX/M 10.00
LP LARRY CORYELL, Spaces (Vanguard VSD 79345) EX/EX 10.00
LP LARRY CORYELL/PHILIP CATHERINE, Twin House (US Elektra 6E-123) EX/EX 10.00
45 BILL COSBY, Hooray For Salvation Army (W. Bros. WB 7096) (EX/Promo/6.00) VG 6.00
LP BILL COSBY, The Best Of (W. Bros. WS 1146) EX/M 10.00
LP BILL COSBY, Is A Very Funny Fellow (US W. Bros. WS 1518) EX/M 10.00
LP BILL COSBY, I Started Out As A Child U.S. W. Bros. W 1567) EX/M 10.00
LP BILL COSBY, Why Is There Air? (US W. Bros. WS 1606) EX/M 10.00
LP BILL COSBY, It's True! It's True! (US W. Bros. WS 1770) EX/M 10.00
45 DON COSTA, I Walk The Line (London HLT 8992) EX 6.00
45 DON COSTA, Never On Sunday (London HLT 9195) EX 6.00
EP DON COSTA, Never On Sunday (HMV 7EG 8701) EX/EX 7.00
LP DON COSTA, Days Of Wine & Roses (CBS Realm RM 52086) EX/EX 10.00
LP DON COSTA, Instrumental Versions Simon & Garfunkel (US Mercury 61177) EX/M 10.00
45 SAM COSTA, I'm Changing My Hat To A Bowler (Palette PG 9026) EX 6.00
45 CO-STARS, Kiss And Make Up (Individual AIRS 101) EX 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, (I Don't Want To Go To) Chelsea (Radar ADA 3, PS) EX/EX 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, Oliver's Army (Radar ADA 31, PS) EX/EX 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, I Can't Stand Up For Falling Down (F-Beat XX1, PS) EX/EX 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, High Fidelity (F-Beat XX3, PS) EX/M 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, Good Year For The Roses (F-Beat XX17) EX 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, Sweet Dreams (F-Beat XX19, PS, wol) EX/M 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, I Wanna Be Loved (F-Beat XX35, PS) EX/M 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, Party Party (A&M AMS 82677, PS) EX/EX 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood (F-Beat ZB 40555, PS) EX/M 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, The Other Side Of Summer (W. Bros. 0025, PS) EX/M 6.00
45 ELVIS COSTELLO, Sulky Girl (W. Bros. W 0234, PS) EX/M 6.00
LP ELVIS COSTELLO, Armed Forces (Radar RAD 15 + EP & postcards) EX/M 15.00
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45 COTTON MILL BOYS, I Don't Regret A Minute (Ireland Hawk 403, PS) EX/M 6.00
45 BILLY COTTON, Yellow Rose Of Texas (Decca F 10602, mol, noc) M 6.00
45 BILLY COTTON, Dam Busters March (Decca Tri F 10630) EX 6.00
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45 BILLY COTTON, Red River Rose (Columbia DB 4095) EX 6.00
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45 BILLY COTTON, Wakey Wakey Medley (Columbia DB 4555, sol) EX 6.00
45 BILLY COTTON & KATHIE KAY, Broken Toys (Columbia DB 4641) EX 6.00
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EP BILLY COTTON, On Parade (Philips BE 12595, wobc) EX/EX 7.00
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LP BILLY COTTON, Let's All Join In (Ember SE 8011) EX/EX 10.00
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45 MIKE COTTON, Zulu Warrior (Columbia DB 4910) VG 6.00
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45 ORVILLE COUCH, Hello Doll (US VJ 631, Promo) M 6.00
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45 JOHN COUGAR, Jack And Diane (Riva 37, PS, wol) EX/EX 6.00
45 JOHN COUGAR, Hand To Hold On To (Riva 38, PS) EX/EX 6.00
45 COUGARS, Red Square (Parlophone R 5038) M 10.00
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LP PHIL COULTER, Phil Coulter's Ireland (K-Tel ONE 1296) EX/M 10.00
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# RECORD COLLECTOR'S GRADING SYSTEM

In order to assist everyone who buys and sells rare discs, Record Collector magazine has originated a set of standards for the condition of second-hand records, cassettes and CDs. Anyone buying or selling records through the magazine must use our conditions to state what amount of wear and tear the disc, its sleeve and/or contents have been subject to. The seven standard condition categories, and a description of what each one means, are listed below:

**MINT:** The record itself is in brand new condition with no surface marks or deterioration in sound quality. The cover and any extra items such as the lyric sheet, booklet or poster are in perfect condition. Records advertised as Sealed or Unplayed should be Mint.

**EXCELLENT:** The record shows some signs of having been played, but there is very little lessening in sound quality. The cover and packaging might have slight wear and/or creasing.

**VERY GOOD:** The record has obviously been played many times, but displays no major deterioration in sound quality, despite noticeable surface marks and the occasional light scratch. Normal wear and tear on the cover or extra items, without any major defects, is acceptable.

**GOOD:** The record has been played so much that the sound quality has noticeably deteriorated, perhaps with some distortion and mild scratches. The cover and contents suffer from folding, scuffing of edges, spine splits, discoloration, etc.

**FAIR:** The record is still just playable but has not been cared for properly and displays considerable surface noise; it may even jump. The cover and contents will be torn, stained and/or defaced.

**POOR:** The record will not play properly due to scratches, bad surface noise, etc. The cover and contents will be badly damaged or partly missing.

**BAD:** The record is unplayable or might even be broken, and is only of use as a collection-filler.

**CDs & CASSETTES:** As a general rule, CDs and cassettes either play perfectly - in which case they are in Mint condition - or they don't, in which case their value is minimal. Cassette tape is liable to deteriorate with age, even if it remains unplayed, so care should be taken when buying old tapes. CDs are difficult to grade visually: they can look perfect but actually be faulty, while in other cases they may appear damaged but still play perfectly. Cassette and CD inlays and booklets should be graded in the same way as record covers and sleeves. In general, the plastic containers for cassettes and CDs can easily be replaced if they are broken or scratched, but card covers and digipaks are subject to the same wear as record sleeves.

# RECORD COLLECTOR'S GRADING READY RECKONER

This Ready Reckoner will help you work out the value of a record in any condition. For example, if you see a disc which is valued at £10 in Mint condition, but which you consider to be in only Very Good condition, then you can consult the Ready Reckoner and find out the appropriate price for the record - in this case, £5. As very few collectors are interested in records in Poor or Bad condition, we consider that any disc worth less than £10 in Mint condition is effectively worthless in Poor or Bad condition.

| MINT | EX | VG | Good | Fair | Poor | Bad |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1,000 | 800 | 500 | 300 | 150 | 80 | 25 |
| 500 | 400 | 250 | 150 | 75 | 40 | 12 |
| 300 | 240 | 150 | 90 | 45 | 25 | 8 |
| 250 | 200 | 125 | 75 | 38 | 20 | 6 |
| 200 | 160 | 100 | 60 | 30 | 15 | 5 |
| 150 | 120 | 75 | 45 | 25 | 13 | 4 |
| 125 | 100 | 60 | 38 | 18 | 12 | 3 |
| 100 | 80 | 50 | 30 | 15 | 8 | 2.50 |
| 75 | 60 | 35 | 22 | 10 | 6 | 2 |
| 50 | 40 | 25 | 15 | 8 | 4 | 1.50 |
| 40 | 32 | 20 | 12 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| 30 | 25 | 15 | 9 | 4.50 | 2.50 | - |
| 25 | 20 | 12 | 7.50 | 3.50 | 2 | - |
| 22 | 18 | 11 | 6.50 | 3 | 1.75 | - |
| 20 | 16 | 10 | 6 | 2.50 | 1.50 | - |
| 15 | 12 | 8 | 4.50 | 2 | 1 | - |
| 12 | 10 | 6 | 3.50 | 1.75 | 0.75 | - |
| 10 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1.50 | - | - |
| 8 | 6 | 4 | 2.50 | 1 | - | - |
| 7 | 5 | 3.50 | 2 | 0.75 | - | - |
| 6 | 4.50 | 3 | 1.75 | - | - | - |
| 5 | 4 | 2.50 | 1.50 | - | - | - |
| 4 | 3.25 | 2 | 1.25 | - | - | - |
| 3 | 2.50 | 1.50 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 2 | 1.75 | 1 | - | - | - | - |

# Lives

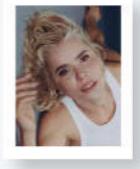
Paloma puts on the glitz in Birmingham

# KEEP THE FAITH

## Paloma Faith brings *MILF* to the masses

### Paloma Faith
Birmingham
Symphony Hall
5/5/24

"I'm so glad to be here, singing about my misery," laughed the singer, waltzing on in a double-split, sequined dress and sunglasses, for a smouldering performance. She belted out How To Leave A Man, God In A Dress and Bad Woman with electrifying force, before elegantly sitting at the piano and singing her heart out on ballad, Already Broken. She ditched the stilettos for the synth-laden disco romp, Cry On The Dancefloor, and bantered humorously with raw honesty between songs, about relationships, motherhood and her emotional story. After walking barefoot through the crowd in the triumphant Sweatpants, she exited, returning with even more glitz for a second set of nostalgic, chart-topping hits, such as Stone Cold Sober and Picking Up The Pieces, before the funkier Crybaby and kooky Upside Down, with its Charleston-esque charm. "We've had a relationship for 16 years," she addressed her fans, "the longest relationship that I've had with anyone, other than my mum," before mini rave covers of Sigala's Lullaby and Sigma's dance-inducing Changing. A torch-lit Only Love Can Hurt Like This left many teary, while joining Paloma dancing away her heartbreak. *Emily MacNevin*



## Q&A

***Tell us about your new book,* MILF.**

I was writing it for three years. Becoming a mother was a life-changing event and I felt disheartened about attitudes towards motherhood from society. I wanted to make something that made women feel seen because I know I felt quite lonely. We have all this literature about how to be a great parent, but we don't have much on how to be kind to ourselves. The book says: "You don't have to completely lose yourself." Your identity doesn't need to be lost, in order to parent well. There's so much unconscious bias and overused words regarding mothers: "selfish". In reality, when you're selfish as a mother, your children are happier. Hopefully, it'll be a liberating read for mothers, and women who haven't had children.

***How's* The Glorification Of Sadness *tour going?***

Amazing. It's the new album first half, then a greatest hits. It feels profound, an emotional journey, and a celebratory feeling. It's the most exhausted that I've ever been on tour, now that I'm a single mum. When I get back home from a gig, I don't have a partner to do the kid's breakfasts and get them off to school. I do it all. No lie-ins now. Driving overnight is gruelling, awful, but my kids come with me on tour on weekends and in the holidays.

***You have festivals next.***

I'm excited. Festival season's brilliant. It's eight years since I last did Glastonbury. The Pyramid Stage next. I feel honoured and moved, and a bit emotional. It means that I'm respected as a performer, which means a lot to me. I *love* performing. It's my main motivator for making music.

### The Rolling Stones
Houston NRG
Arena, Texas, US
28/4/24

Promoting their first album in nearly two decades, the octogenarians had a few kinks to work out after two years off the road, Jagger visibly winded after the first clutch of songs and taking a brief seat, while Keith Richards merely repeated the chorus of Little T & A in his solo spot. Still, he offered some fascinating sitar-like pulls on Honkytonk Women, Ronnie Wood dug in with charm and tenacity, Steve Jordan stomped reliably, and the stadium debut of Sweet Sounds Of Heaven was divine, Mick and backing vocalist, Chanel Haines, combining to displace even the power of Gimme Shelter. That the Stones are still so capable of such ecstatic musical transcendence is amazing. *Stephen Conn*

### *Tallinn Music Week*
Tallinn, Estonia
3-7/4/24

The 16th *TMW* restated its international status with a distinctly local flavour. Taking place in the Telliskivi gentrified creative hub, it embraced artists from 35 countries, from Canada to South Korea. *Heavy Music Estonia* showcased Northern Europe, Tallinn-based punk/NWOBHM band, Elukas, standing out. Their impeccable, vigorous performance evoked The Stooges and Judas Priest. Next day, Paavli Kultuurivabrik presented Finnish electronic jazz trio, Virta, playing a captivating, immersive set. *Irina Shtreis*

### Speedvark
London Camden
Fiddlers Elbow
9/4/24

With engagingly quirky original songs and a connoisseur choice of classic rock/prog, Speedvark may be the ultimate party band. Driven by Pete Flatt's tight but loose percussion, an impressive take on Led Zeppelin's In The Light and Nazareth's The Faith Healer mingled with their own surreal Mr Rat and closer, I Hate Your Mother, affirming their all-round skillset. *Paul Davies*

### House Of All, The Courtesy Group
London Tufnell
Park Dome
18/4/24

House Of All, ex-members of The Fall, take the bassy growl of their alma mater as a satisfyingly robust template for their sound, Martin Bramah offering caustic, intermittently ear-catching monologues from a lectern, *a la* Mark E Smith. Bramah, the Hanley brothers and Si Wolstencroft brought the right noises, if rarely connecting with their audience beyond their meat-and-potatoes post-punk. By way of contrast, Birmingham-based support, The Courtesy Group, preceded with a scattergun and The Birthday Party-esque brand of what Smith described as a "rowche rumble". Frontman, Al Hutchins, waded into the audience in a performance raucous, gnarly and drily humorous. Well worth witnessing-uh! *Johnny Sharp*

### *Ugly Fest*
Wolverhampton
KK's Steel Mill
9/3/24

Blues-rockers, The Howling Tides, delivered chunky riffs, slide guitar, bouncy melodies, gritty vocals and 70s twang. Foot-stomping beats and squealing guitars from These Wicked Rivers provided dramatic roots rock, with earth-shaking grooves and soulful vocals. The Virginmarys kept energy levels up with cymbal smashes, throaty aggression and razor-sharp riffs, twisting punk with ballsy rock'n'roll. Phil Campbell & The Bastard Sons offered loud Motörhead thrashing, bass rumbling and maniacal, crunching riffs, and funk rockers, Ugly Kid Joe, brought grunge, massive singalongs, and a hard-hitting, fast-paced set of nostalgic classics. *Emily MacNevin*

### The Zutons
Bristol Marble Factory
12/4/24

Their first tour proper since reuniting saw a touch of ring rust, with a few false starts, but the band delivered a fun, classic set, shifting between soulful blues and psych-pop. Mischievous early favourites like You Will You Won't and Pressure Point were as infectious as Abi Harding's dance moves. Recent single, Creeping On The Dancefloor, should become a staple, while Valerie transformed the audience into a sea of phones. No encore, but let's hope we don't have to wait another 15 years! *Darren Howells*

### Kula Shaker
Bexhill De La
Warr Pavilion
23/4/24

In psychedelic lighting, KS began exuberantly with the recent, rocky Gaslighting, a statement of intent from a tight, exhilarating, high energy band. Crispian Mills' choppy ➤

Photo: (Paloma Faith) Jemma Dodd

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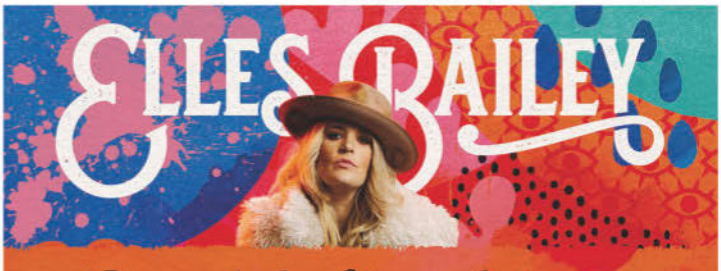

*Beneath the Neon Glow Tour*

25 SEP LINCOLN THE DRILL
26 SEP NORWICH THE WATERFRONT
17 NOV CHESTER THE LIVE ROOMS
1 DEC LEEDS BRUDENELL

wah wah leads played off Jay Darlington's organ fills and Alonza Bevan's sinuous bass, all held together by Paul Winter Hart's powerhouse drumming. The original line-up revisited *K* highlights, along with future classic, the *Natural Magick* title track, with its catchy riffs and upbeat funk groove. The intensity barely let up in an intoxicating show culminating in the heady climax of Hush, Tattva and a transcendent Govinda. *Nig Hodgkins*

### Charles Hazlewood's Paraorchestra Deathbook
London Camden Roundhouse
24/4/24
Death was served up by the Paraorchestra, featuring Suede's Brett Anderson, at the *In The Round Festival*. Naturally, he, Gwenno, who joined in on Skeeter Davis' The End Of The World, and Nadine Shah, on Mercury Rev's Holes, were in funereal garb. The black celebration included Depeche Mode's Enjoy The Silence, including Gwenno and Shah, but Suede's The Next Life really stood out with the eccentric instrumentation of the Paraorchestra of non-/disabled musicians. *Jeremy Allen*

### The Stranglers
Cambridge Corn Exchange
20/3/24
The band bravely opened with the overlooked Just Like Nothing On Earth and Hallow To Our Men, rewarding the hardcore faithful in a three-hour set celebrating touchstone tracks from *Raven* and *Dark Matters*. They didn't play Sleazy, Walk On By or Hanging Around, testament to how many great songs they can call on. Jean-Jacques Burnel admitted that he'd considered packing it in in 2020. Thank God he reconsidered. All hail the Meninblack! *Nig Hodgkins*

### Ute Lemper
London St Martin's In The Field Church
27/4/24
A bewitching artiste with spellbinding stagecraft, Lemper confirmed her star status in autobiographical storytelling encompassing the arc of her storied career. Sharing personal Marlene Dietrich anecdotes and recounting the toll that *Chicago* took, her tales were punctuated by piano and double-bass on sophisticated jazz from the Weimar Republic to the West End, plus her current *Time Traveller*. Oozing sassy star quality and class, she commanded the venue with her startling vocal range, passionate delivery and magnetic presence, saluting her ecstatic fans on exiting to fervent applause. *Paul Davies*

### Jim Bob
Southampton 1865
27/4/24
A rapt, un-Carter USM-style crowd listened respectfully to JB's cabaret-style opening half, with Chris T-T on piano, while Jim Bob's career as a novelist was reflected in astute, poetic lyrics. An unexpected I Don't Like Mondays introduced a band hits set, including much audience repartee, a nostalgic Stuff The Jubilee! and incendiary Angelstrike, featuring the brilliant Jen Macro's magnificent guitar wrangling. *Oliver Gray*

### Norda Mullen
London Putney Half Moon
28/4/24
A little bit Moody, a little bit Blue, it was an enchanting evening of solo material by The Moody Blues' flautist, Mullen. Ray Thomas' widow, Lee, and Justin Hayward's sister, Teresa, made it a familial affair, and Norda's instrumental Nights In White Satin left her not the only one breathless as the misty Mellotron faded to a pin drop. Her jaunty single, Down To The River, impressed, as did a cover of Michelle Shocked's If Love Was A Train. A down in the groove Live For Today, I Like It and Steal My Thunder revealed her vocal prowess over her finely-balanced six-piece band. On the threshold of a solo dream. *Paul Davies*

### Jake Bugg
Frome Cheese & Grain
2/5/24
Bugg began with a 30-minute solo set, before returning for 80 more with his rhythm section. Ostensibly acoustic, standouts included Country Song and Simple As This, while the main set showcased new up-tempo rock. A distinct shift from 2021's dance-pop, opener, Trouble Town, was the scene-setter. His guitar-playing impressed, notably on cracking newbies, Zombieland and Instant Satisfaction. 2012's eponymous debut provided seven crowd favourites, including Seen It All, Taste It, Two Fingers and the ferocious Lightning Bolt. The final groove-heavy banger, All I Need, gave an opportunity for all to shuffle. *Ian Templeton*

The Boss conducts communal singing in Cardiff/Caerdydd

### Show Of Hands
Canterbury Kent University
4/5/24
Phil Beer and Steve Knightley are on their *Full Circle* farewell tour, heavy on nostalgia and humorous anecdotes. A freewheeling trawl through their output and influences from schooldays included Davy Graham. Serious stagecraft and superb songwriting was evidenced on the spiky protest of Country Life and Arrogance, Ignorance And Greed, spine-tingling ballads, Exile and The Dive, and trad fiddle rave-ups like The Blind Fiddler. The closing Cousin Jack was followed by their standard encore, Don't Be A Stranger, celebrating friendship. Happy Trails, lads! *Nig Hodgkins*

### Average White Band
London Royal Albert Hall
2/5/24
Fifty years since they shook America with their down-home Scots-born funk, AWB's two originals, Alan Gorrie and Onnie MacIntyre, led their precision-tooled outfit with elan on their farewell bow. Halfway in, The Isleys' Work To Do brought the crowd to their feet and, from then on, the party didn't relent. Vocalist Brent Carter (ex-Tower Of Power) was overwhelmed by the surroundings and sang with incredible passion. His take on Cloudy and Luther Vandross-style extemporisation united many couples in the audience. Guitarist Jim Mullen (from support, Kokomo) joined the revelry of the closing Let's Go Round Again and Pick Up The Pieces. A moving masterclass of white-sock soul. *Daryl Easlea*

### Mr Big
Wolverhampton KK's Steel Mill
22/3/24
After suffering vocal struggles, Eric Martin was joined by Michele Luppi (Whitesnake), and they ripped into Addicted To That Rush, the groovy Take Cover, and blues-rock Price You Gotta Pay, with bassist Billy Sheehan on harmonica. Daddy, Brother, Lover, Little Boy was a speedy standout, Paul Gilbert's masterful guitar licks kicking off Voodoo Kiss, with Sheehan on double-neck bass, while the upbeat hard rock My Kinda Woman boasted deep grooves and driving riffage. Cat Stevens' Wild World saw Martin on acoustic, before Gilbert's fiery guitar solo, and Good Loving had Martin on bass, Gilbert on drums, drummer Nick D'Virgilio on guitar, and Sheehan singing. They returned to their main instruments for The Who's Baba O'Riley. Phenomenal. *Emily MacNevin*

### Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band
Cardiff Principality Stadium
5/5/24
Kicking off in Europe under a closed roof by debuting the uplifting So Young & In Love, The Boss, 74, offered three-plus hours storming through his catalogue with no sign of fatigue. Lonesome Day, Hungry Heart, Better Days and Wrecking Ball sounded immense. A fan-requested If I Was The Priest preceded covers such as Commodores' Nightshift, while his rousing Because The Night was a highlight. The spectacle closed with an encore jam greatest hits, Born In The USA taking the energy level to new heights, before Born To Run, Dancing In The Dark and Twist & Shout. Finally, he returned for a haunting acoustic I'll See You In My Dreams. *Ian Templeton*

### Focus
Bury St Edmunds Apex
1/5/24
Focus' *Hocus Pocus* tour stop ran for two-plus hours, with Thijs Van Leer MCing and leading the band through the likes of Sylvia, House Of The King and deeper album fare. Guitarist, Menno Gootjes, and six-string bassist, Udo Pannekeet, fizzed on solo spots, as did drummer Pierre Van Der Linden, 78. Full of energy, he added jazzy accents in unfamiliar places and explosive tom-tom/cymbal barrages. Thijs moved rather gingerly, but his organ and flute prowess remain undimmed. Catch them while you can. *Chris Mawson*

### Darius Rucker
Birmingham $O_2$ Academy
30/4/24
Rucker opened with the upbeat Have A Good Time and Beers And Sunshine, as the crowd flung beer in the air. Support, Tyler Booth, joined in on an impeccable cover of Johnny Cash's Folsom Prison Blues, bringing all to their line dancing feet, before Hootie & The Blowfish's Americana ballad, Let Her Cry. Swigging bourbon before Hootie classics, Hold My Hand and Only Wanna Be With You, he followed with a 90s covers medley, including Tim McGraw's I Like It, I Love It, TLC's Waterfalls, The Zutons' Valerie and Oasis' Champagne Supernova. He closed with the bop of Wagon Wheel, with its blistering fiddle solo and infectious beat. *Emily MacNevin*

### Joe Bonamassa
London Royal Albert Hall
5/4/24
Bonamassa warmed up with the gratifying Hope You Realize It, setting the blues-rock mood, before thrilling on Bobby Bland's Twenty-Four Hour Blues. His solos spoke volumes, such as on the dark Self Inflicted Wounds, epic Heart That Never Waits, and majestic The Last Matador Of Bayonne, wherein you could hear a pin drop before the crescendo finale. Reese Wynans (keys) and guitarist Josh Smith shone on Lazy Poker Blues, while backing singers, Jade McCray and Danielle De Andrea, added spice. Bonamassa tore into Just Got Paid, the *tour de force* ripping into a fiery solo on Daze And Confused, featuring a bombastic drum solo from Lemar Carter. Homage was paid to Bernie Marsden before Mountain Time ended a refined evening. *Mark Taylor*

Photo: (Bruce Springsteen) Jon Herron

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OCT 2 **MANCHESTER** O2 RITZ
OCT 3 **LONDON** O2 FORUM KENTISH TOWN
NEW SHOW OCT 5 **LONDON** O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE
OCT 6 **BRISTOL** O2 ACADEMY

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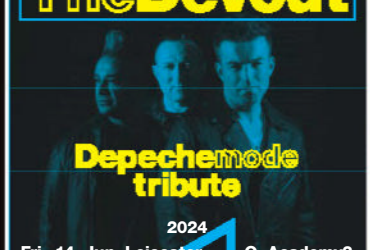

Depechemode tribute

2024

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fri | 14 Jun | Leicester | O2 Academy2 |
| Sat | 15 Jun | Liverpool | O2 Academy2 |
| Fri | 05 Jul | Bournemouth | O2 Academy |
| Fri | 12 Jul | Bristol | O2 Academy |
| Fri | 26 Jul | Birmingham | O2 Academy3 |
| Sat | 31 Aug | London | O2 Academy Islington |

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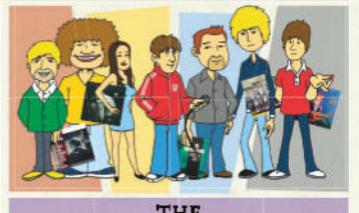

# THE SOUTHMARTINS

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

SAT 14 SEP 2024 MANCHESTER O2 RITZ
SAT 18 JAN 2025 NEWCASTLE O2 CITY HALL
SAT 25 JAN 2025 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY
SAT 01 FEB 2025 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY2
SAT 07 JUN 2025 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY2

# Gig Guide

**Fatboy Slim July** (5) Manchester Castlefield Bowl (6) Scarborough Open Air Theatre (20) Glasgow SWG3 **August** (24) Halifax Piece Hall

**Garbage July** (12) Glasgow *TRNSMT Festival* (14) Edinburgh Usher Hall (15) Bridlington Spa (17) Wolverhampton Civic Hall (19) Manchester $O_2$ Apollo (20) London Wembley OVO Arena

**Hozier July** (7) London Finsbury Park (9) Chepstow *Summer Sessions* (10) Glasgow Green

**Heart July** (1) London Greenwich $O_2$ (3) Birmingham Utilita Arena (5) Nottingham Motorpoint Arena (6) Manchester AO Arena (8) Leeds First Direct Arena (9) Glasgow OVO Hydro

**Hozier July** (7) London Finsbury Park (9) Chepstow Racecourse (10) Glasgow Green

**Avril Lavigne, Simple Plan July** (2) Cardiff Castle (3) Manchester Castlefield Bowl

**The National July** (2) St Blazey *Eden Sessions* (3) Cardiff Castle (4) Manchester Castlefield Bowl (5) London Crystal Palace Park (11) Edinburgh Castle

**Ruts DC July** (10) Brighton Albert (12) Huddersfield Parish (14) Derby Hound Dog (16) Southampton Papillon (18) York Crescent

## Now Booking

**Altered Images October** (19) Brighton Concorde 2 (20) Bristol $O_2$ Academy (22) Glasgow St Luke's (23) Liverpool $O_2$ Academy (28) Cambridge Junction (29) Birmingham $O_2$ Academy (30) Leeds Brudenell **November** (1) Holmfirth Picturedrome

**Anthrax, Kreator, Testament November** (21) Manchester $O_2$ Apollo (22) Wolverhampton Civic Hall (23) London Hammersmith Eventim Apollo (27) Glasgow OVO Hydro

**Chris De Burgh February 2025** (21) Liverpool Philharmonic Hall (22) Harrogate Convention Centre (25) Basingstoke Anvil (26) Bournemouth Pavilion (28, **March** 2) London Cadogan Hall (3) Birmingham Symphony Hall

**Bullet For My Valentine January 2025** (26) Cardiff Utilita Arena (28) Glasgow OVO Hydro (30) Manchester Co-op Live (31) Birmingham Utilita Arena **February** (1) London Greenwich $O_2$

**Bad Manners November** (30) Sheffield Leadmill **December** (4) Gloucester Guildhall (6) Newcastle Boiler Shop (7) Leeds Brudenell (10) Chester Live Rooms (12) Southend Chinnery's (13) Exeter Phoenix (14) Southampton 1865 (19) Manchester $O_2$ Ritz (22) Nottingham Rock City

Ex-The Runaways' **Cherie Currie November** (22) Huddersfield Parish (23) Manchester Bread Shed (24) Carlisle Old Fire Station (26) Edinburgh Bannerman's (28) Dundee Beat Generator (29) Troon Winterstorm (30) Belfast Deer's Head **December** (1) Warrenpoint Skylite Room (5) Stoke Eleven (6) London Camden Dingwalls (7) Bridgewater Cobblestones

**Lloyd Cole September** (8) Bexhill De La Warr Pavilion (9) Exeter Corn Exchange (10) Bath Komedia (13) Guildford G Live (14) Bury St Edmunds Apex (16) Birmingham Town Hall (18) Shrewsbury Theatre Severn (19) Lytham St Anne's Lowther Pavilion (21) Hamilton Town House (22) Greenock Beacon Arts Centre (24) Whitley Bay Playhouse (25) Ilkley King's Hall (26) Sheffield City Hall

**The Corrs, Natalie Imbruglia November** (8) Belfast SSE Arena (11) Manchester AO Arena (12) Cardiff Utilita Arena (14) Birmingham Resorts World Arena (15) Newcastle Utilita Arena (17) Glasgow OVO Hydro (18) Sheffield Arena

**Chameleons December** (6) Bristol Marble Factory (7) London Shepherd's Bush $O_2$ Empire (12) Glasgow Garage (13) Newcastle Riverside (14) Manchester Albert Hall

**Fish February 2025** (19) Haddington Corn Exchange (21) Manchester Albert Hall (22) Wolverhampton Civic Halls (23) Portsmouth Guildhall (25) London Palladium (26) Bristol Beacon (28) Aylesbury Waterside **March** (1) Cambridge Corn Exchange (2) Nottingham Rock City (5) Liverpool Philharmonic (6) Newcastle $O_2$ City Hall (7) Aberdeen Music Hall (9) Glasgow $O_2$ Academy

**Gabrielle April 2025** (2) Glasgow SEC Armadillo (4) Newcastle $O_2$ City Hall (5) Birmingham Resorts World Arena (8) Hull Connexin Live (9) Sheffield City Hall (11) Cardiff Utilita Arena (12) Manchester AO Arena (15) Brighton Centre (18) London Greenwich $O_2$ (19) Bournemouth BIC

**Nick Heyward October** (18) Basingstoke Haymarket (19) Bury St Edmunds Apex (22) Sunderland Fire Station (23) Manchester Waterside (24) Leeds City Varieties (26) London Cadogan Hall (30) East Grinstead Chequer Mead Theatre (31) Hove Old Market **November** (2) Stroud Subscription Rooms (9) Wimborne Tivoli

**Engelbert Humperdinck September** (8) London Palladium (9) Manchester Opera House (10) Birmingham Symphony Hall (12) Glasgow RCH

**IQ December** (21) London Islington Assembly Hall **February 2025** (14-15) Bury Met

**Kamelot November** (1) Wolverhampton KK's (2) London Kentish Town $O_2$ Forum (3) Manchester Ritz

## TOUR DU JOUR

**Spotlighting an upcoming road trip**
**This month: ASH COSTELLO OF NEW YEARS DAY**

***How have you been preparing for the tour?***
We rehearse twice a week, all day, and put a lot of thought into the set-list, song order, intro and interludes, and even the outro music.
***Do you have any pre-/post-show routines?***
We get in a huddle and pray, and we play live concert footage of our favourite artists to get us in the mood.
***Will you be playing anything that you rarely perform?***
A ton of songs off the new *Half Black Heart*.
***Will the set-list change much?***
Very rarely. Once we decide the order, we stick to it.
***Are there any venues that you're particularly looking forward to?***
We love playing festivals most – the excitement of the day, getting to see other bands, old friends, and making new ones.
***Will you check out your tour supports?***
We always try to get out in the audience.
***Have any shows stood out of late?***
I saw Judas Priest last night and I was super inspired.
***Are you looking forward to the UK?***
We feel the love when we go to the UK. Something feels like we belong there. It's hard to explain.

***New Years Day play in September at (21) Southampton Engine Rooms (22) Leeds Key Club (23) Bristol Thekla (25) London Islington $O_2$ Academy (26) Manchester Academy 3 (27) Glasgow Slay (28) Birmingham $O_2$ Academy 2.***

**Oysterband & June Tabor October** (3) Birmingham Town Hall (4) Bristol Beacon (5) Bexhill De La Warr Pavilion (12) Manchester RNCM (13) Sunderland Fire Station (15) Leicester De Montfort Hall (19) London Barbican

**Tom Robinson Band October** (2) Manchester Band On The Wall (4) Aberdeen Tunnels (5) Edinburgh Voodoo Rooms (9) Norwich Arts Centre (10) Cambridge Storey's Field Centre (17) London Islington Assembly Hall (18) Southampton Joiners (25) Hitchin Club 85 (26) Oxted Hazelwood Theatre (27) Oxford Bullingdon (30) Birmingham Hare & Hounds **November** (1) York Crescent (2) Holmfirth Picturedrome (3) Nottingham Metronome

**Sleep Token November** (25) Glasgow OVO Hydro (26) Manchester Co-op Live (28) Birmingham Utilita Arena (29) London Greenwich $O_2$ (30) Cardiff Motorpoint Arena

**Twenty One Pilots May 2025** (5) Glasgow OVO Hydro (6) Birmingham Resorts World (8) Belfast SSE Arena (911) Manchester AO Arena (13-14) London Greenwich $O_2$

**Therapy? November** (8) Edinburgh Liquid Room (9) Nottingham Rock City (10) Norwich Epic (12) Southampton 1865 (14) Manchester Academy (15) Bristol $O_2$ Academy (16) London Shepherd's Bush $O_2$ Empire

**Judie Tzuke October** (13) Sunderland Seventeen Nineteen (15) Glasgow Oran Mor (17) Sheffield Greystones (24) Bath Chapel Arts Centre

**Walter Trout & Beth Hart October** (16) Buxton Opera House (17) Edinburgh Queen's Hall (18) Gateshead Glasshouse (19) Holmfirth Picturedrome (22) Bury St Edmunds Apex (23) Frome Cheese & Grain (24) Birmingham Town Hall (25) London Islington Assembly Hall

## TOUR NEWS

*London:* **Arcade Fire**, Brixton $O_2$ Academy, 5,7 July. ■ **Rumer**, Queen Elizabeth Hall, 22 November. ■ **Faithless**, Camden Roundhouse, 14 June. ■ **Florence + The Machine**, 11 September, **David Gilmour**, 9-12,14-15 October, **Hundred Reasons**, 7 May 2025, Royal Albert Hall. ■ **Joan Osborne**, Islington Union Chapel, 2 July. ■ **Madeline Bell**, 8-9 July, **Patrice Rushen**, 18-20 July, **Lee Ritenour**, 22-23 July, **The Headhunters**, 26-27 July, Ronnie Scott's. ■ **Natasha Bedingfield**, Camden Koko, 12 September. ■ **The Waeve**, Hackney Village Underground, 29 October. ■ **Efterklang**, Barbican, 5 October. ■ **Michael Bolton**, 5 July, Greenwich $O_2$. ■ **Bonnie Tyler**, 25 July, Greenwich Indig$O_2$. ■ **Herbaliser**, Venue 229, 8 December. *Also:* **Jan Akkerman**, Fletching Trading Boundaries, 22-23 June.

*For more tours/gig news see www.recordcollectormag.com/latestnews*

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**

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# IN STORES

# NOW

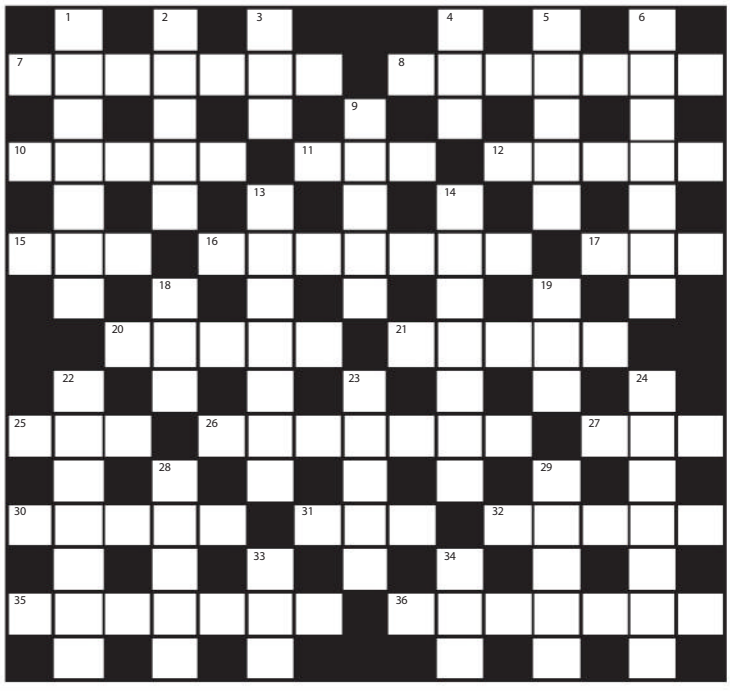
# Crossword & Competitions

**Across**

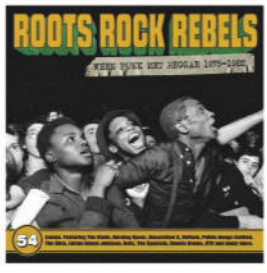
7) _ _ Of Blue (3,4)
8) _ _ *Were Here* (4,3)
10) *Catch* _ _ (1,4)
11) _ Loves You (3)
12) *Let's* _ _ *It* (3,2)
15) _ My Loving (3)
16) Kylie _ (7)
17) _ Back (3)
20) _ Beat (5)
21) *Them* _ (5)
25) _ *To Differ* (3)
26) High-class Stranglers single (7)
27) *Who Made* _ (3)
30) Against Me! album, _ _ *Eternal Cowboy* (2,3)
31) *We Too* _ *One* (3)
32) _ Jam (5)
35) *Forces Of* _ (7)
36) Pat _ (7)

**Down**

1) Norah Jones 2009 album (3,4)
2) Chuck _ (5)
3) _ Years After (3)
4) Tin _ Out (3)
5) Stealers _ (5)
6) "Unofficial live _" (7)
9) _ *Out The Lights* (5)
13) Dave Brubeck Quartet 1959 LP (4,3)
14) Tim _ (7)
18) Russell's brother (3)
19) _ Fun (3)
22) _ Boys (7)
23) *Let* _ *Be Rock!* (5)
24) Middle Of _ _ (3,4)
28) *Best* _ (5)
29) _ Church (5)
33) *Boys Don't* _ (3)
34) _ White (3)



## PUNK MEETS REGGAE




The Clash, Burning Spear, Generation X, Culture, Public Image Ltd, Steel Pulse, The Specials, Dennis Brown, The Ruts, Madness, Black Uhuru and many more… This new 3CD set from Cherry Red focuses on the period 1975-1982 when reggae influenced the UK punk scene. Here are 54 tracks plus an in-depth booklet and a foreword by Don Letts. To be in with a chance of winning one of three sets, please tell us which punk band covered Bob Marley's Johnny Was on their debut LP: a) Stiff Little Fingers, b) The Ruts, c) Generation X?

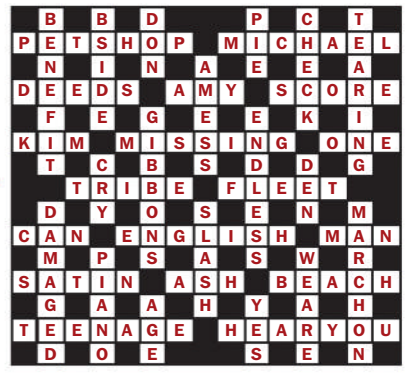
## SEEDS VINYL

The Seeds' second album, released in 1966, is a pop-art garage rock classic. Mr Farmer was to become a *Billboard* Hot 100 single in 1967 and the second side of the album features the 14-minute epic, Up In Her Room. This deluxe gatefold vinyl edition features the original stereo mix along with an 8-page insert, plus a second LP stuffed with mono versions, outtakes and more. An essential reissue from Ace Records' expanding vinyl range. To be in with a chance of winning one of two copies, please tell us which Seeds track appeared on the original *Nuggets* compilation: a) Mr Farmer, b) Pushin' Too Hard, c) The Other Place?

## PAUL WELLER VINYL

"It's grown-up, accomplished, with a sense of play, yet never complacent; it's about not just living, but revelling in the moment. Paul Weller's electric autumn that began with *22 Dreams* effortlessly continues, and this may be the best instalment yet." So says Daryl Easlea in his five-star review of Weller's new album, *66*, in last month's *RC*. You can find out for yourself if you agree, as here's a chance of winning one of three vinyl copies of *66*. Please complete and submit this month's crossword.

### JUNE Solution



**MAY WINNERS**
**NORTHERN SOUL:** Sarah Walsh, Jason Ward **YARDBIRDS:** John Hall, Andrew Bromelow
**DEEP PURPLE:** Stephen Tongs

All entries **with your address** to **rccompetitions@metropolis.co.uk** or to Record Collector Competitions, 2nd Floor, Saunders House, 52-53 The Mall, Ealing, London W5 3TA, by 11 July unless otherwise stated. Only enter once per competition – if submitting via post please include your phone number.

# UNDER THE RADAR

**Artists, bands, and labels meriting more attention**

## This month: Mr Big

Mr Big – the UK version, not the US hair metal band (about whom, more later) – should have been chart perennials in the mid-70s, but instead, they scored just one Top 10 hit with Romeo, in 1977. With the release of a 3CD set of the band's complete catalogue on Cherry Red, singer/mainman Dicken, aka Jeff Pain, was happy to discuss the band's history and what he did next.

Prior to Mr Big's breakthrough hit, the band, under the name Burnt Oak, had played numerous gigs at The Marquee, supporting many of the big-name acts of the late 60s and early 70s. "Jack Barrie, who ran The Marquee, fell in love with our bass player, Pete [Crowther], and we ended up playing loads of nights," Pain explains to *RC*. "After a year or two, we were just talking at the back of the club and there had been a headline in the paper – some 'Mr Big' had got arrested – and one of the roadies said that would be a good name for a band. Next thing, Jack put it up at the front of the club and said, 'There you go, you're Mr Big now', and we just stuck with it – that was in 1972."

As Mr Big, the band's profile started to rise, helped by support dates with the likes of Status Quo, Stackridge and Babe Ruth. "We were a progressive band, really," Pain reflects, "and the bands that were getting deals were straightforward pop bands. Then the publishing company, Red Bus, showed some interest, and they suggested we became a cockney band."

They fully embraced the rebranding, adopting the Pearly King look by the time they did their first TV appearances. "I sewed all the pearls on the clothes myself," Pain laughs. "We thought, why not? We also changed direction musically – basically becoming a fully-fledged pop group." With help from their publishers, they'd signed to Epic, releasing their first single, Eee I'm All Right, at the end of 1974. Sadly, it disappeared without a trace.

"We didn't worry too much about changing direction at first. In fact, we thought, Stuff it, if we can get on TV then why not? We appeared on TV in *Softly Softly*, as Paul Nicholas' band, Smiling Slim Slavey & The Slavers, by which time I thought we'd blown all credibility… The worst thing we ever did was the Christmas With Dicken single in 1974." That record also failed to make any kind of impact, even with the boost of an appearance on *Lift Off With Ayshea*, the only other national pop show on TV besides *Top Of The Pops*.

In spite of the new look and the heavy push from Epic, the hoped-for success failed to materialise. All was not in vain, though. "One night we'd been on at The Marquee – in our pearly suits – and we were asked to play at The Speakeasy later on. I think we caused a bit of a stir. The suits really caught the lights and attracted quite a bit of interest. After the gig, Stan Tippets, who was Mott The Hoople's road manager, raved about our performance. He wanted to introduce us to Mott's manager, Bob Hirschman, and we signed with him in 1975."

Things improved in terms of live opportunities, earning the opening spot on a number of prestigious tours. "We toured with Queen, and Freddie [Mercury] tried to get me to embrace the music that we were doing, but I wasn't enjoying the pop stuff. I wanted us to be like Deep Purple or Rory Gallagher. We never really wanted to be a pop band, so we weren't worried about singles success."

**In 1977, against punk and disco's dominant trends, Mr Big finally managed to get that elusive hit**

With the failure of their third single for Epic, Lucky Man, in 1975, they split with the label by mutual consent and quickly secured a deal with EMI. Reviews of the band revealed confusion from music press and fans alike. Live, Mr Big came across as heavier than their singles suggested, causing them to fall into the cracks between the pop and rock camps.

In 1977, against punk and disco's dominant trends, Mr Big finally managed to get that elusive hit with Romeo, making it all the way to No 4 in the UK and even saw them enter the US charts. "By that time, Eddie Carter had joined the band, and he co-wrote it with me," Pain says. "He's got a lovely voice, so we came up with the idea of alternating the vocal lines." Surprisingly, the BBC initially banned the song, citing innuendo in the lyrics, though fortunately, common sense prevailed, and the ban was reversed. The follow-up single, Feel Like Coming Home, barely scraped into the Top 40 and that was it in terms of chart success for the band.

Dicken was well aware of the burgeoning UK punk scene, having been friends with Malcolm McLaren. "He'd done a lot of our clothes over the years," he notes. "We were doing a gig at Welwyn Garden City, and this young band came onto the stage. Our roadie said I had to see them. It was the Sex Pistols. I looked at them and thought, Give me a break – what's going on here? Malcolm told me they were going to be the next big thing. I didn't really like the music, but I could see that they had a frontman who really knew what he was doing."

Things started to look ominous when EMI refused to release their third album, *Seppuku*, in 1978, even though it was produced by Ian Hunter. Ironically, it was their most focused, rock-orientated work, with a punchier approach that seemed to resolve the identity crisis conundrum. "When Ian got involved, he said, 'We're here to make a rock album – get that in your heads, so let's just go for it', and that's what we did."

The band split in 1979, although Dicken managed to continue working in the business for a few more years, forming Broken Home, signing to WEA and getting Mutt Lange on board as producer. Again, chart success eluded him, and he eventually found himself working regular jobs. "I spent about 15 years on building sites, got married, and had five children," he says. "I had to keep making money. Now I'm married to a beautiful Norwegian girl who's 48 years younger than me. We're making an album: we write together and she's a great singer."

Dicken is philosophical about the way things panned out. "I'm a Christian, and talking as one, I think that everything that happened was God's grace to me," he declares. He does, however, take some issue with the appropriation of his band's name by the American hair metallers.

"I was in The Marquee and Lemmy said to me, 'Hey, Mr Big, there's another band with Billy Sheehan in called Mr Big.' I thought he was joking. Then a bit later someone said they heard Mr Big on the radio, and it really got me down. I think there's something wrong there, morally, when a band's had a hit record. The name should be sacrosanct at that point. Anyway, *I'm* still going. They're doing a farewell tour, so I've outlasted them when I bring my new album out later this year."

**Words: Mark McStea**
**Mr Big: The Album 1976-78** ***is available on Cherry Red Records.***

# THE ENGINE ROOM

**The unsung heroes who helped forge modern music**

## This month: Gustavo Santaolalla

The name Gustavo Santaolalla may not be over-familiar to those outside of Latin America, and yet millions in the West will have heard his music, not least through the exposure of his soundtrack for the post-apocalyptic video game, and subsequently the HBO television adaptation, *The Last Of Us*. The Argentine musician and composer, who specialises in the charango (a diminutive Andean string instrument) was born in Buenos Aires in 1951. His earliest exposure to music came via his record-loving parents. Gifted his first guitar from his grandmother, a young Santaolalla took lessons but frustrated his teacher with his inability and unwillingness to learn through formal methods. He was, however, a naturally skilled player. "When I was 10," he recalls, "she [his teacher] came and told my mum, 'I quit.' She said, 'His ear is stronger than my teaching.'"

Santaolalla's first foray into professional music came in 1967 when, alongside reed-player Ara Tokatlián, bassist Guillermo Bordarampé and drummer Alberto Cascino, he founded a band called The Crows. Off the back of a three-song demo tape, they secured a deal with influential producer Ricardo Kleinman. As well as a prolific producer, Kleinman was head of the radio show, *Modart En La Noche*, responsible for breaking through hundreds of native artists. It was Kleinman who persuaded the group to change their name to Arco Iris ('rainbow' in English) and to sing in Spanish. Arco Iris played a sophisticated and mellow blend of R&B and traditional music, releasing 11 albums over their career, five with Santaolalla onboard: *Arco Iris* (1970), *Tiempo De Resurrección* (1972), *Sudamérica O El Regreso A La Aurora* (1972), *Inti-Raymi* (1973) and *Agitor Lucens V* (1974). In 1975, Santaolalla left to form another band, Soluna, with future Latin superstar singer Alejandro Lerner. Soluna recorded just one album, *Energia Natural* (1977) – a lovingly crafted folk-rock record. Shortly afterwards, Santaolalla fled to Los Angeles, increasingly fearing for his safety after the 1976 coup d'état which saw Jorge Rafael Videla and his military junta take power.

Settled in America, he founded progressive rock group Wet Picnic, recruiting keyboardist Anibal Kerpel, Laurie Buhne and drummer Rob Brill (whose future credits as an engineer include works by Tom Petty, Etta James and Fiona Apple). Wet Picnic released the quirky record, *Balls Up,* in 1982. Santaolalla made a brief return home to produce the album *Pensar En Nada* (1981) for celebrated folk-rock singer Leon Gieco and, more significantly, released his first solo album, *Santaolalla* (1982), through RCA subsidiary label, Alquimia. *Santaolalla* offered a thrilling mix of traditional Argentine, rock, and dub reggae sounds. Alejandro Lerner contributed keyboards, and the rhythm section comprised members of notable Argentine new wave band, GIT.

Following the success of his work with Leon Gieco, for the remainder of the decade and on into the 90s, Santaolalla notched up an impressive number of producer credits – well into the "many hundreds", he estimates. Precise figures are hard to come by, but certainly, by the latter half of the 90s, he had become a potent force in the Latin fusion/rock scene (often referred to as *rock en Español*), guiding countless new bands through their burgeoning careers. Among the most significant of these are works by future stars Café Tacuba, Juanes, Molotov, and Julieta Venegas.

**By the late 90s, he had become a potent force in the *rock en Español* scene**

Influenced by The Clash and The Smiths, Mexican group Café Tacuba were discovered by Santaolalla at a gig in Mexico City. The producer hooked the band up with Warner Music Latina and produced their self-titled debut (1992) which, similar to their heroes, The Clash, ranged from spiky post-punk to adventurous pop. The band have since released eight studio albums, garnering a plethora of Grammy and Latin Grammy awards and nominations, with Santaolalla at the controls.

Columbian musician Juanes is another big winner in those stakes, with 24 Latin Grammys and 15 million record sales to his name. Again, his debut album, *Fíjate Bien* (2000), was produced by Santaolalla. Breakout Mexican rock/rappers Molotov and singer-songwriter, Mexican-American Julieta Venegas, likewise recipients of many accolades and generous sales, are just two more to have had their first albums produced by the charango master – an incredible track record for the man from Buenos Aires.

In the midst of all this, Santaolalla found time to release his second solo album, *Gas* (1995), an eclectic mix of influences and a fascinating listen, sung in Spanish throughout. The following year he released his final solo record to date, the sublime *Ronroco*. The title refers to a particular type of Santaolalla's beloved charango and the record, in which he features as sole musician, serves as a love-letter to the instrument – a dazzling and beautiful imagining of luminary landscapes.

This marks another turning point in his life, as the spirit of *Ronroco* runs throughout another branch of the musician's career: composing for film. In 2000, Santaolalla worked on his first soundtrack, for the acclaimed Mexican thriller, *Amores Perros,* by director Alejandro González Iñárritu (his first feature). This was followed by scores for Iñárritu's *21 Grams* (2003), Che Guevara biopic, *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2004), *North Country* (2006) and *Brokeback Mountain* (2005). Santaolalla picked up a BAFTA award for *The Motorcycle Diaries*, while *Brokeback Mountain* earned him an Oscar for Best Original Soundtrack, a feat the composer would replicate a year later with his score for another Iñárritu feature, *Babel*.

Over the last 20 years, Santaolalla has continued to add to his production and composing credits, for both film and television, acquiring prestigious awards in both categories. Always one to look to new horizons, he provided the music for the 2013 video game, *The Last Of Us*, the animated short, *Borrowed Time* (2015), and ecological documentary, *Before The Flood* (2016). In 2022, he produced albums for Juanes, Molotov and Café Tacuba.

At 2023's Latin Grammy Awards, Santaolalla collected a Trustee Prize, awarded to "individuals who have made significant contributions to Latin music in ways other than performance". Deserved recognition for a man who has done so much for so many.

**Words: Chris Wheatley**

**The Last of Us: Season 1 (Soundtrack from the HBO Original Series) *is available now from Milan Records.***

# BIRTH! SCHOOL! WORK! DEATH!

**Ed Harcourt...** on the soundtrack to his life

**Trini Lopez If I Had A Hammer** (Reprise R.20198, 7", UK, 1963) **£2**

My Dad is much more into classical music, but he had a few records that I heard constantly in my childhood, this being one of them. I remember from an early age being transfixed by this song coming out of the old Tannoy speakers; I also used to hear a lot of The Goons and sometimes even Ravi Shankar coming out of his study or the kitchen. But this song brings back those early memories of hearing all this incredible music for the first time.

**Mozart *Robert Casadesus/George Szell: Piano Concerto No.21*** (CBS SBRG 72234, LP, UK, 1965) **£10**

I started playing the piano when I was nine years old, taught by the actor Michael Crawford's mother in Eastbourne. Random, I know. One of the pieces that I learnt a few years later was this very beautiful concerto, featured in the Swedish drama *Elvira Madigan*, which is one of my dad's favourite films. My wife ended up walking down the aisle to it and I surprised her by getting the first three bars tattooed on my inner left arm. Mozart, along with The Beatles, had a huge influence on my love of melody.

**Screaming Trees Shadow Of The Season** (Epic ESK 4935, CD single, promo, US, 1993) **£5**

Between the ages of 14 and 16 I absolutely hated school so music was my solace. One of the songs I'd listen to on the way to school was this opening track on *Sweet Oblivion*. It instilled a sense of self-esteem and bravado that was sorely lacking at the time. Little did I know that, 15 years later, I'd be on tour with Mark Lanegan and also Greg Dulli, who is now one of my best friends. I also used to religiously listen to *Gentlemen* by the Afghan Whigs, incredible record. I ended up playing keys on Mark's last record, which was a huge moment for me, albeit bittersweet following his untimely passing.

**Sparklehorse Sea Of Teeth** (on *It's A Wonderful Life,* Capitol CDP 724353342722, CD, UK, 2001) **£5**

I went to Buffalo in January 2001 to mix a few tracks with Dave Fridmann up at his famous Tarbox Studios. When I arrived, after miles of deep heavy snow, the start of a serious bout of bronchitis and the distant, ominous sound of dogs/wolves howling, I was shown into the studio and made myself at home. I went down to the control room and found the latest Sparklehorse album, fresh from being mixed the day before, still on the computer. The engineer kindly let me listen to the record and it just blew my mind. When I heard Sea Of Teeth, a little sickly tear rolled down my cheek.

**Elbow Scattered Black And Whites** (from *Asleep In The Back*, V2 VVR 1015881, 2LP, UK, 2001) **£50**

Both Elbow and I were nominated for a Mercury back in 2001 so our paths crossed a little. It wasn't until my first tour of the US in 2002, SXSW festival particularly, that I got to hang out with them properly. I was in a relationship that wasn't going so well and this song helped get me through a fairly tenuous time. It just really resonated. Guy Garvey is still a good friend and my wife now plays violin with them.

**Patti Smith Pissing In A River** (Arista SP2, 7" mislabelled, promo, US, 1976) **£20**

I was a massive fan of Patti and was asked to perform at her *Meltdown* festival with the Brian Jonestown Massacre. That was an interesting night to say the least. I ended up starting my set with this track and Patti heard about it, so invited me onstage a few days later to play piano on her version with the band. She then asked me to play on *Peaceable Kingdom*, which was lovely.

**Alice Coltrane *Journey In Satchidananda*** (Impulse AS 9203, LP, US, 1971) **£70**

Around 2007, I was still touring a lot and decided to throw myself into a rather hedonistic lifestyle with committed vigour. When we were in Amsterdam one time, I decided to ingest a heroic amount of magic mushrooms. Cut to six hours later, I'm in my hotel room, out of my mind, and this song has been on a loop all night. But I still love it! Her music is overwhelming in its beauty and spirituality, but this track especially is bizarrely something I can still play over and over again and never get bored with. It took me a few days to get back to normal and I left all my clothes in the hotel room.

**Tom Waits *The Heart Of Saturday Night*** (Asylum Records K 53035 LP, UK, 1976) **£30**

When my wife was in labour, we had music playing in the hospital room and for some reason she requested "early Tom Waits". Could you imagine if *Bone Machine* was playing instead? Luckily for everyone, my first-born daughter emerged into the world to the elegiac and melancholy strains of this masterful song. Years later, I met Waits and mentioned it. He said, "Something's gotta be playing when you're born," then told me he "took his wife to see *Eraserhead* when she was pregnant"!

**Frank Sinatra I Get Along Without You Very Well** (on *In The Wee Small Hours*, Capitol T581, LP, UK, 1959) **£25**

For the last 10 years, I've been in Marianne Faithfull's band, working on her albums and sporadically writing with her. The first record that I played on was *Give My Love To London* and I ended up doing a rearrangement of this classic. It's now firmly ensconced in my old jukebox in our kitchen as four separate 45s. My kids are sick of it, but I'm just obsessed, no less by Nelson Riddle's sublime string arrangements but also the 3am heartbreak-and-whisky feel of it all.

**Beastie Boys Sabotage** (Capitol 8 813992 CD single, UK, 1994) **£3**

I first came across the Beastie Boys in the mid-80s on MTV when we lived in Holland, but it wasn't until the mid-90s that I really dived into *Check Your Head* and *Ill Communication* and became totally obsessed. My son is rapidly becoming a pretty snazzy drummer and we listen to Sabotage a lot, it's just the best song to get the day going or the party started. It still sounds amazing to this day and it's literally one chord.

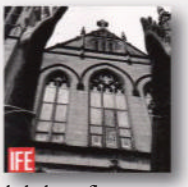
***Ed Harcourt's new album,* El Magnifico, *is on Deathless Recordings.***

# 10 OF THE BEST

This month: **African Electronica**

**Ammar 808** *Maghreb United* (Glitterbeat Records GBLP 060, LP, Germany, 2018) **£20**

Gloriously inventive, with abrasive beats and fluttering, polyrhythmic stabs, Maghreb United caused a stir when it first appeared, and feels just as fresh six years on. Taking a stage name with a nod to his favourite drum machine, Tunisian producer Sofyann Ben Youssef does a wonderful job of conjuring electro-organic soundscapes located somewhere between a cyberpunk future and a mythical yesterday, kicking up clouds of metallic dust that sparkle and dance with dervish spirit.




**ÌFÉ** *IIII+IIII* (Discos Ifá DI LP001, 2LP, Puerto Rico, white vinyl, 2018) **£30**

New Orleans-based African-American producer and percussionist Otura Mun, the artist behind ÌFÉ, mixes Yoruban religious music with easy-flowing, bib-bop flutters, vocoder voices and swaying rhythms. You'll hear particles of everything from Bollywood-esque choral vocals to field song hollers and modern R&B woven throughout this wonderfully crafted set of songs. There's a vibe for every setting, from smooth dancefloor numbers to expansive, cinematic backdrops and romantic ballads. Meanwhile, a deep current of spirituality binds this album together.

**William Onyeabor** *Who Is William Onyeabor?* (Luaka Bop 6 80899 0079-1-7, 3LP, UK, 2013) **£30**

Although popular in his native Nigeria throughout the 70s and 80s, Onyeabor remained largely unknown outside of his country's borders until this compilation album, on David Byrne's Luaka Bop label, appeared. Buzzing synth lines, thumping drum machines and electronic tinkles flow up against smooth funk rhythms and hand percussion across nine absorbing tracks. There's something quite magnificent in the deceptive simplicity of this music.

**Keleketla!** *Keleketla!* (Ahead of Our Time AHED 024, 2LP, UK, 2020) **£30**

A joint project initiated by the titular South African cultural and educational organisation and UK charity, In Place Of War, a host of fascinating artists feature on this sparkling release which sees electronic duo Coldcut collaborate with, among other notables, legendary drummer Tony Allen, gifted singer Nono Nokoane, percussionist Thabang Tabane and multi-instrumentalist Gally Ngoveni. Musically, *Keleketla!* paints a broad, pulsating canvas, with an intoxicating palette of funky vibes, driving synth lines, stirring sung-spoken lyrics, Afro beats and deep bass rumblings.

**Konono No 1 & Batida** *Konono No 1 Meets Batida* (Crammed Discs cram261LP, LP, Belgium, 2016) **£20**

Built from a junkyard aesthetic, with rudimentary equipment hand-crafted from spare parts and salvage, this Kinshahsa-based outfit describe their music as 'Congotronic.' Here, their home-spun, rattling electronica rubs shoulders with Angolan/Portuguese artist Batida, exploding into a backyard firework display where rumbling drum'n'bass lines weave around lo-fi vocals, old-school sequencer melodies and clashing percussion. It's as joyous and unique as it sounds – forever teetering on a thrilling edge which recalls 70s German experimental rock as much as classic Afrobeat.

**Francis Bebey** *New Track* (Ozileka OZIL 3313, LP, France, 1982) **£60**

A polymath of considerable talent whose work covered music, musicology, novel writing and poetry, Bebey was born in Douala, Cameroon, attended New York University, and ended his days in Paris, France. Bebey's musical outlook was just as wide-ranging, merging traditional African rhythms with elements of Western pop, jazz, classical and electronica. *New Track* contains some of his most adventurous sounds, fusing deep bass and hand percussion with rolling synths and blaring keys.

**Zazou, Bikaye + Cyl** *Noir Et Blanc* (Crammed Discs Cram 025, LP, Belgium, 1983) **£40**

Recorded in 1983 as a collaboration between Congolese artist Bony Bikaye, French composer Hector Zazou and experimental electronic musicians CY1, there's a lo-fi, bedroom-recording feel to this album which only enhances its compelling otherness. This is retro-space-age music: clunky deep blobs step and stride under rattling bells, synthetic drums, high pitched blips and odd guitars. Had The Residents been born in the African continent, this could easily have been their sound.

**Ata Kak** *Obaa Sima* (Awesome Tapes From Africa, ATFA 014, LP, US, 2015) **£25**

Hypnotic, new wave synthesiser lines and thudding drum machines churn and dance beneath Ghanaian Ata Kak's free-wheeling, high-pitched vocals on this wonderfully weird album to which the word 'unique' can accurately be applied. There's something gloriously off-kilter and yet utterly addictive about the results. Funky to the core, this is music that rightly should only be heard by chance over an unknown radio station while lost driving through the night, never to be rediscovered once the sun has risen, restoring normality to the world.

**Nihiloxica** *Kaloli* (Crammed Discs CRAM297DLP, 2LP, Belgium, 2020) **£20**

Hailing from the Ugandan capital of Kampala, the Nilotika Cultural Ensemble percussion group team up here with fellow Kampala-based UK musicians pq and Spooky-J to create something as slick as it is menacing: a swirling, pulsating cyborg built from sharp biological polyrhythms and eerie industrial washes. By turns cryptic, frenetic, and dramatic, *Kaloli* is a creature of paradox, a pulsating human heart encased in a cold urban twilight.

**KOKOKO!** *Fongola* (Transgressive Records TRANS 417XRT, LP, UK, 2019) **£12**

Another fantastically inventive outfit from the heart of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, KOKOKO! utilise homemade electronic equipment to whip up a striking blend of shuffling beats, jumping sparks of techno and darkwave sound palettes. Bass electro chords take the place of conventional brass, underpinning racing drums, quick-hopping synth melodies, chanting voices and swiftly circling chimes. KOKOKO! play with distortion, off kilter structures and abrasive squeaks while always remaining accessible, supplying hooks to catch the ear and rhythms to quicken the pulse.

**Words: Chris Wheatley**

***Butu* by KOKOKO! is released this July via Transgressive Records.**

# PRE-ORDER NOW!

Who knew when Group X formed in 1969, that 55 years later the sound of the UK counterculture would still be alive and ritualising onstage and on record as the mighty Hawkwind. *Record Collector Presents*… Hawkwind explores the band's incredible musical and social legacy through classic album profiles, eyewitness anecdotes and collector stories with brand new interviews from all current band members including the good Captain, Dave Brock, the true warrior on the edge of time. There's also a seven-page discography, books, films and memorabilia, a live report from 2024, unseen pix from the band at Disneyland in 1973 – yes, really – and praise from celebrity fans-turned-sonic cosmonauts. In search of space rock? Fire up the Silver Machine and head this way.

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# ELVIS

## ON STAGE
## FEBRUARY 1973

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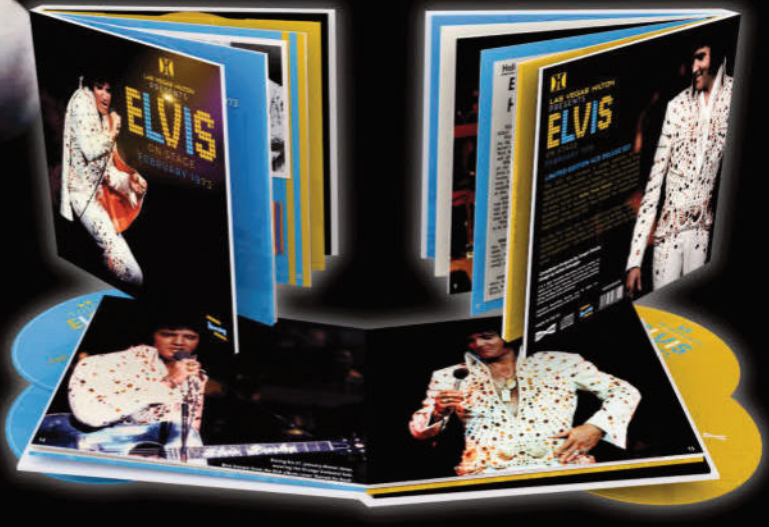


This 4CD set contains a varied selection of live performances recorded in February 1973, during Elvis' eighth engagement in Las Vegas. The shows, recorded at the Hilton Hotel, took place weeks after the historic satellite TV show, known as Aloha From Hawaii, was filmed and broadcast on 14 January. Also included are bonus rehearsal tracks, recorded days before the engagement began. For the first time ever the material from these shows is presented in stereo. The accompanying booklet also features liner notes which set the scene.

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